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PHASES OF MUSICAL ENGLAND.

116

PHASES OF MUSICAL ENGLAND.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE GREAT TONE POETS.

Being Short Memoirs of the Greater Musical Composers.

(FIFTH EDITION.)

'The subjects are well chosen; the memoirs bristle with piquant anecdotes. From Bach to Schumann Mr. Crowest keeps our admiration at fever heat.'—*Academy.*

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PHASES

OF

MUSICAL ENGLAND.

BY

FREDERICK J. CROWEST,

AUTHOR OF

'THE GREAT TONE-POETS,' 'A BOOK OF MUSICAL ANECDOTE,'

ETC., ETC.

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1881.

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TO MY FRIEND

THE

REV. T. S. CURTEIS, M.A.

RECTOR OF SEVENOAKS,

UNDER WHOSE ROOF I HAVE SPENT MANY HAPPY HOURS,

AND WITH WHOM I HAVE SHARED MUCH

PROFITABLE AND ENJOYABLE

MUSICAL PRACTICE.

PREFACE.

THE title to this volume may be, I feel, open to objection, and a more exact one would perhaps have been 'Phases of Un-musical England,' inasmuch as my readers will find that I have dealt rather with the *dark* than the *bright* side of Musical Art in this country. Yet it must not be supposed that I take a pessimist view of our Art. I have, I believe, laid bare herein some few of those unhealthy influences to which the Art is especially prone, and which have probably gone far to win for us the continental reputation of being the Great Un-musical Power of Europe—strong enough in commerce and steam, but devoid of musical talent, invention, and discrimination, notwithstanding (as regards this latter) that as a people, we probably spend upon the Art and its Artists more money than any two or three of the other nationalities combined.

Sir Julius Benedict said at Wigan some months since, that 'so far from being unmusical, he considered the English as on the

whole the most musical nation in the world;' and although I can hardly agree with this assertion, there is yet good ground for granting to English people a juster reputation than that which foreigners accord us. For the musical machinery of England is now well in motion, and from South Kensington, the Royal Academy of Music, and elsewhere is issuing a musician of a new order. The masters and instructors at these Institutions are men of the highest calibre; their influence, we may hope, is being felt by the students, some of whom may, perchance, prove themselves not unworthy of the mantles of their tutors.

Believing, then, as I fully do, in the future of music in our country, I have ventured to retain my title, 'Phases of Musical England' in the hope that though the Art be at present fettered with somewhat serious obstacles, these will under the new order of things—a right system of Musical Education—disappear: and that England will ere long gain a supremacy in Music, and so win as much of the admiration, if not envy, of surrounding nations for her musical strength as she already commands for her social and political importance.

F. J. C.

June, 1881.

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PHASES OF MUSICAL ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

MUSICAL CRITICISM.

Prelude—Byron on Critics—Their Utility—Object of Criticism—Twenty-five Years' Results—What they Do not—What they Do—Quantity and Quality—Present Day Style—Over-learned Critics—Under-learned ones—A Specimen—Mr. Gurney 'On Music and Musical Criticism'—The Critic a *Guide*—The Artist's Province—The Critic's Province—Qualifications of a Critic—The Comparative Style of Criticism—Unsound Criticism unfair to Artists—Advantages of Sound Criticism to Performers, Listeners, and the Art—The High Office of a Critic—Our Method a Procrastinating one—Impromptu Criticism.

LET me and my readers start with the critical side of Music in England—that is, the pen-and-ink view. And for this reason. We are constantly hearing from certain writers who style themselves critics, a great deal concerning

the unsatisfactory state of Art and Artists (musical, of course) in London and the provinces; and when the string that is harped upon is not the unsatisfactoriness of these, it is their merits and happy condition that are praised in fulsome language equally opposed to the truth—and it may be added, the tastes of intelligent readers. Between the two courses we get a sort of *via media* of criticism, which, if it be not altogether satisfactory, has at least the merit of being honest, well-meaning, and learned—indeed, over-learned. Because, then, the critical side of our Art is to my mind one of the most unsatisfactory of its aspects, because this critical pot is constantly crying out that the musical kettle is irretrievably black, I ask my readers to accompany me first in a survey of this phase of Musical England.

Critic. The word strikes different ears with dissimilar effects. To some it has an awful sound, and these would flee from critical influence when embodied in the customary form of flesh and bones if they could do so. To others the idea of a critic comes welcome.

A *critic.* Fancy. An embodiment of one's own wonderful ability, many other people's besides, and his own cleverness! What a

comprehensive mind—and all this cased in nineteenth-century garb! That man will be able to appreciate *me*. Many don't care a straw for critics. Byron did not, when he wrote—

> 'As soon
> Seek roses in December—ice in June;
> Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff,
> Believe a woman, or an epitaph,
> Or any other thing that's false; before
> You trust in critics.'

But, to get to our subject. Like all other arts, that of Music is not free from the ink-pot; that is to say, it is not only a subject which people delight to meddle with, but it is also one which folks find time to write about critically, and otherwise. My object in this chapter will be to acquaint the reader with those who write about Music critically, and who we will therefore call 'critics.'

It would be useless to deny the utility of both critics and criticism, whether these be of Music, Painting, Sculpture, or any other Art, since it is through the dissemination of views and opinions (whether these be right or wrong, is not important for present argument) that we are able to arrive ultimately at the truth concerning those matters which interest us.

Criticism, too, provokes argument, and so it is that the whole subject-matter is thrashed out, the sound is sifted from the unsound, and what remains are conclusions so safe, and have been arrived at in so excellent a manner, that the public that is too ignorant in such matters to hazard an opinion of its own is quite safe in retailing such conclusions. Here, then, is a gain. But surely Criticism, it will be said, should have some ulterior object other than that of throwing out straws which may be laid hold of by those people who like to talk about matters musical. What the end and aim of present-day criticism is, it is not easy to say; but Truth and Perfection are, perhaps, the Ideal which is seen by those who call themselves Critics, and which they in their turn strive to educate others to behold and appreciate also. Truth and Perfection in Musical Art (to say nothing of other Arts) have not, however, in our humble opinion, yet been brought by critics within the comprehension of the vast majority of English people who must still be called unmusical; and it certainly says little for the educating mission of our Musical Critics and criticism, that as a nation we yet know not the 'good and evil' of Musical Art, and are unable to wean ourselves from

either the taste for tunes, sickly ballads, and music-hall songs, or are able to resist the unhealthy influence which these must exercise upon our natures.

Not to go too far back, it may be stated that for the last twenty-five years critics have been writing and filling the columns of newspapers and periodicals with their critical efforts, and yet the British public remains as ignorant as ever of, and quite as indifferent to, the literary or educational side, if it may be so termed, of matters musical: so that we have to face the great fact, that although during this period this country has spent some millions of money in buying in various ways artistic talent (chiefly foreign), yet the taste of the country at large has scarcely improved, while its literary musical growth has gone on at a sorry pace, and has made still less progress. And that for this reason. The lessons which should have been learnt from the many-sided models which have been set before us have neither been pointed out nor preached to us by those to whom we look for guidance, namely, the critics. We are not so sanguine as to suppose that the several millions of people in Great Britain will ever arrive at the happy condition of being in full

knowledge of the characteristics of the school of Wagner, or Brahms, as opposed to those of the school to which Palestrina and Carissimi belong, any more than that the whole of humanity would ever be converted were parsons and ministers to stand day and night and preach sermons in their pulpits; but we feel strongly that the future of Musical Art in England is to a great extent in the hands of the Musical Press, which is not, however, making the best appearance of which it may be said to be capable, nor is turning to the best account its influencing and edifying power: nor will it be amiss to remember, while we are making so much 'fuss' about our musical greatness in the future, that it is in the directing power of the Press that we must hope to find a potent and a more efficient agent towards the accomplishment of that much-to-be-desired end—the musical education of the English people. For, it must be borne in mind, we are not essentially a musical people, as are, for instance, the Italians: musicians do not spring up on English soil near so rapidly as do capitalists, clergymen, shopkeepers, and mechanics; and this fact brings us at once to the problem as to how best to educate a nation of men, women, and

children in an Art which they have not naturally inherited.

This must be accomplished by precept as well as by example. The plan of bringing over to this country Artists of all kinds and sizes, physically and artistically, has been well tested, and while we are glad to be able to say that many of these have proved of inestimable benefit to the musical status of England, yet we must not shut our eyes to the fact that much of this talent has been lost upon the public—that no appreciable advance has been made in our musical distinctiveness—and that the actual benefits collectively arising from this importation of a musical element have not been commensurate with the great outlay which has been made to secure it. These facts, with many others, confirm us in our impression that education in the Art of Music depends not more upon hearing music than upon reading about it. Did one wish to learn to play the violin, it would be of but little use for him to hear Herr Joachim play Bach's Chaconne or Brahms's Concertos from morning till night, unless he had previously shut himself in a room, with a violin and Spohr's Tutor, and there learned how necessary it is to have become acquainted with the real diffi-

culties of violin-playing before he can expect to gain hints from the prince of players referred to. And so it is in all phases of Musical Art. We must read music and read of it. It is of no use spending years and years in hearing music simply—that is mere ear-tickling—we need to throw ourselves into the argument of the matter. To be sound conversational musicians we must be well grounded in the history and theory of the Art: we must acquaint ourselves with the characteristics which mark the style of each of 'the masters.' As there is the Raphael of Painting, so also is there the Raffaello of Music: there is the Michael Angelo, the Holbein, and the Turner of Music, as there is of its sister art; and it is to an appreciation and to a ready perception of the characteristics marking these various musical styles that we hope eventually to become educated. But our training must not even end here. It is not, we hope, assuming too much when we conclude that of the many who help Musical Art in this country both by their presence and patronage, the majority thereof have an object in view beyond that of allowing the music they hear to pass in at one side of their heads and out of the other. Our end should be not only to hear the music, but

to profit by it. And then come the questions, 'How can we profit by it?' and, 'In what directions?' These are points coming within the province of 'the critic,' and which it is his duty to explain to his readers.

* * * * *

The present condition of Musical Criticism in England cannot be said to be remarkable either for its quantity or genuine quality. At the most, our fund of criticism is only represented by an occasional notice in one or more of the daily journals, and by a few class papers, which latter, however, are characteristic and more famous for the zeal with which they write up the houses which they represent and the publications issuing therefrom than for any services which they render to the cause of Musical Art. But even this amount of journalistic enterprise would be ample were the criticism both healthy and of a kind to be desired; or did it perform the same serviceable functions towards Music as do the Art journals and newspapers for Painting, etc. This, however, is not so, and in a hundred ways it might be shown how ridiculous a part is played by those who 'do' the criticism for Musical England. For instance, what good is served by the untutored splutterings of the

anonymous writers in our weekly and bi-weekly prints—writers who, under the garb of some high-flown *nom-de-plume*, regale their readers with flippant notes upon a subject of which such writers know comparatively nothing. Why should the public lend itself to such a prostitution of good ink and paper? Scraps of personal gossip and bits of scandal and slander cannot be called criticism, *malgré* newspaper proprietors permit their columns to be lowered with the insertion of such rubbish. It is not requisite to give the names of newspapers with such hirelings, but it is only fair that the public should be warned before it accepts the balderdash which is served up to it. When light tenors are described as baritones—when symphonies are discovered which, however, are not in existence, the fitness of such guides for criticising the performances of singers and instrumentalists is questionable. Yet they lose no opportunity for pulling down the fair reputation of men and institutions, and of calling into question the quality of some of the finest music which this country has had since the days of Henry Purcell. All this, and much more, and their fitness, I repeat, for criticising music, must be based upon some very original and questionable qualifications.

Surely it cannot be argued that Music does not admit of the same efficacious criticism as is bestowed upon Painting? Yet this would seem to be the argument, judging from a comparison of the year's round of criticism of the two Arts. In the one case we find elaborate articles, thoroughly readable, instructive, and above all bearing upon them the impress of practical knowledge and authority; while with regard to Music, those who watch the reports of its progress and growth have to content themselves with almost bare records of performances, dates, etc. We would ask—Is it not possible to secure the same healthy stimulus for Musical Art, as Mr. Ruskin and many such able critics are giving to Painting? Sound criticism will give the Art vital action, but a brief statement of passing events, with an occasional flight into the mysterious region of technical terms and language, and a few comparisons between past and present Artists, will stimulate it but little. Rarely do we come across a notice which can be rightly styled a criticism, or which is at all useful or instructive. Thus the year's round of musical performances is chronicled, and we learn no more than that 'Mr. "So-and-so" appeared and sang somebody's song in a manner *which*

left absolutely nothing to be desired;' or, that 'Herr "This," or Signor "That," on coming forward was greeted with loud cheers, and that he played some master's concerto for pianoforte and orchestra *as he alone can.'* By this means, it is true, we become acquainted with what is going on in the Musical World, but surely 'criticism' is a misnomer for such information. We do not want to be so constantly reminded of everything that is about to take place in the shape of performances, but we need rather to be informed more fully and more intelligently on the point of how such performances are carried out. All musical doings are now so largely advertised beforehand, and the artistic reputation of those who perform is also so well guaranteed, that the music-loving public have no need to give themselves concern about what is going on, or of the artists they will have to listen to at any concert of average merit; so that the scanty records which the papers give us are really worthless, inasmuch as we may be quite sure that the performers advertised *will* appear if possible, and that they may be relied upon to do their best and not to damage their well-earned reputation.

Where, then, we would ask, is the utility of such critical enterprise? Mr. Ruskin or Mr.

Wedmore might just as reasonably recapitulate the whole of the pictures hung at a season's Academy, without troubling to enlighten the uninitiated in the characteristics, the merits, and demerits of the canvases: or, to take another Art—that of Literature, a catalogue of a year's books might as consistently be offered to those who read, in lieu of the entertaining, instructive, and incisive reviews which appear in our standard literary publications. There is much, no doubt, that is stereotyped in a year's round of musical work, but that must not be made the excuse either for the feeble condition of English musical criticism, or for the fact that most of the literary musical matter of those papers and periodicals which attempt to treat the subject betray one of two things—ignorance or idleness on the part of its authors. It is not enough to be told that songs are sung, solos are played, and scores are rendered 'wonderfully well.' The public needs, and probably would prefer, to be enlightened upon the points of interest in the compositions which have been brought before their notice at a concert: they would like to know the characteristics of the masters whose scores they hear: to be directed to instances of such character-

istics occurring within any given score: to be informed of the conditions of Musical Art when any one master lived: the circumstances under which he lived and worked: and the state of Art in a general sense at the time, with its bearing upon his work. These are a few points upon which the critic might as reasonably dwell as upon a long-winded statement concerning the artists who perform —information, by-the-bye, which is strongly suggestive of the 'left-nothing-to-be-desired' style: inasmuch as the artists to be met with at any respectable concert are, as has been already pointed out, men and women of high repute. Nor need the critic end here. He might impart to his readers, in a popular manner, a share of his store of musical learning, and by degrees accustom them to read and interest themselves in the literary side of matters musical. Instead of using a lot of high-flown terms and stock Italian phrases, a digression might well be made for the purpose of explaining the same. To take it for granted that the general public know the meanings of the terms Adagio, Andante, Scherzo, Stretto, and Coda; that it is *au fait* at the construction of the Symphony, and alive to the peculiarities and capabilities of

every instrument in the modern orchestra, is assuming too much. In many other respects critics are apt to err on the side of over-learning. Why, for instance, is reference invariably made to the *tympani*, when the more homely word 'drums' would be more generally understood? Why continue to hamper the reader with the expression *corni* (the Italian for 'horns'), which many people (those even who call themselves musicians, much more the unenlightened) have frequently taken to refer to the 'cornets' in an orchestra. We do not wish to discourage the growth of the Italian language in England, but such words as those quoted, with *fagotto* (bassoon), *tromba* (trumpet), and, in fact, unnecessary technical terms, are out of place in notices which are intended for other than scientific folks to read, and which should have for their object the education and enlightenment of 'the million.'

Not to make too much of the error into which critics fall in being too learned, we may well say a word or two concerning those who afford remarkable proofs of being ignorant of the subject upon which they would go so far as to teach others.

It is to be feared that these latter form a

large majority of those who write on the subject of Music, and who have done infinitely more towards impeding the progress of the Art than to fostering its growth. In a consideration of such it is well to remember that while they place the Art in this false position, they do not miss their reward, though that be nothing more honourable than a claim to those epithets which the genius of such men as Disraeli, Byron, and others have invented for such unfortunate dabblers.

There is no lack of such critics. As there are few people who in times of financial difficulty would hesitate to turn to 'professing' Music, so they are scarce folks who would not hazard an opinion on any point of musical argument: and strangely enough, many of these find newsvendors willing to print and disseminate whatever they may be pleased to write. Moreover, it is the fashion just now to be thought musical: therefore it becomes imperative on those who are neither practical nor theoretical musicians to 'dub' themselves critical Press representatives of the Art. Vocally and instrumentally such are as dumb as mutes; but as they must do something for Music, they write about it. Professing everything, they nevertheless know nothing; and yet they con-

trive to secure no little of that literary musical work which should fall into the hands of men who, not necessarily being artists, yet know the Art well enough to justify them in writing about it. They advertise their own incompetency in numberless ways; prominent among which is their constant recourse to stock critical phrases; a studied avoidance of all references which may provoke argument or lead to retort: the use of broad, general statements which cover everything and yet mean nothing: accompanied by regrets that Miss Somebody's singing was 'throaty,' while Mr. Somebody else 'lacked both tone and execution in his playing.' Occasionally our model of incompetence is diverting and even amusing. An instance of this kind recently came under the writer's notice. In a paper which professes to be of a 'high class,' and to have an 'influential circulation,' there appeared lately an account of one of our best concerts, in which the writer, after indulging in a high-flown description of the proceedings, winds up with the surprising piece of information that 'Herr —— played Beethoven's Sonata in three sharps, with his accustomed ability.' The world in general knows, however, that Beethoven has written at least two pianoforte

sonatas with the signature referred to; besides which, our informant might have remembered that the key of F sharp minor is also indicated by the signature of three sharps!

In his concluding article 'On Music and Musical Criticism,' in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1879, where he at length touches upon his subject, Mr. Edmund Gurney, after telling his readers that 'the function of the critic in its highest aspect is that of an interpreter. By his greater sympathy with his subject and knowledge of its special scope and function in relation to the whole imaginative activity, he may really fulfil the enviable part of making others see and appreciate marvels otherwise quite beyond their ken; and it is hard to over-estimate the influence of this kind which one man may have where the subject is adapted to such treatment,' makes the seemingly paradoxical statement that 'the true *interpreter* of music must always be the performer, not the critic.' While, however, I cannot concede the point of the performer being the interpreter of music—knowing as I do how much ignorance prevails among performers outside their Art—it is equally difficult to accept the critic as an interpreter when in some cases he is—and always should be—more of a *guide*,

who, having a greater knowledge of, and sympathy with his subject, and seeing more keenly than the general public the varied picturesqueness which his superior imaginative faculty readily traces, is well able to bring home to the eyes and senses of those who are content to follow him in his critical peregrinations, aspects and views which the transient glance of the unaccustomed eye could scarcely be expected to receive. In filling such a *rôle* the critic would be doing immense service. It is of no use to deprecate the seeing with the eyes of others. To be able to avail ourselves of such a resource in the face of our own powerless and defective vision is of the greatest moment, and although there are, as I have no doubt there always will be, those who deprecate the borrowing of other people's eyes, and who would refuse to believe in the existence of marvels beyond their ken, we shall do well, as a music-loving, I will not say music-making community, to leave ourselves in the hands of our cultured guide and critic, content to follow in his footsteps, and willing to accept the lines traced by him as being those leading to the most congenial regions—the most pleasant landscapes of that unknown country which we desire to explore.

It is useless to suppose that the performer can fulfil the functions of an interpreter until at least our audiences are sufficiently educated to comprehend his meaning; and even to such a trained assembly the performer would seem to be not so much an interpreter as an expositor of music. He gives his reading of the text of Bach and Wagner as intelligently as he knows how, but he seldom preaches on his subject—in his readings he never stays to hold forth to his audience, either to admonish them or direct their attention to points of teaching, characteristics, and the like. The stream of music passes along, completely impressing some, slightly affecting others, but with the majority of people it passes in at one ear and out at the other. And this is when the performer is educated outside his Art; but it is no uncommon thing to find artists with excellent voices and marvellous executive powers, yet who are as illiterate as they can well be, and as slow to detect Lytton from Marryat, or Carlyle from the writer of 'Lady Audley's Secret,' as they would be incapable of journeying to the moon and back. I have heard, for instance, of a certain artist (who occupies the highest place in his profession at the present day) being asked if he had ever read 'Sartor

Resartus,' and on acknowledging frankly that he 'not only hadn't read it, but had never heard of it,' was informed that Carlyle wrote it, when he exclaimed, 'Who's he?' and seemed quite ignorant of the existence of one whom many people regarded as the greatest mind in Europe. We shall hardly be going forward, therefore, if we leave ourselves in the hands of interpreters whose general culture is so limited that they would not perhaps dispute an assertion that Vienna was in Finsbury. We must rely upon the critic. It is his duty, and should be his aim, to act as a sort of middle man betwixt performer and listener. Let him tell us how to hear music—how to qualify ourselves as listeners—let him show us what is good, characteristic, masterly, worth remembering—in short, let him enlighten us upon all those subtle and beautiful forms and ideas which his natural instinct and power of direct vision enable him so readily to perceive. We have ears, and yet we hear not the mighty musical truths which are being told year after year by our vocal and instrumental propagandists. The function of the critic is to analyse and to sift these truths, and to lay them before us in some homely fashion that will be accept-

able to our at present not powerful musical faculties.

* * * * *

It is to be feared that musical criticism is an Art which has yet to be learned in England. The sooner, too, that the subject is put upon a proper basis—the qualifications of the critical representative decided upon—his functions well understood both by artists and audiences—the better will it prove to be for all parties.

As to the qualifications which a critic should possess, much might be said ; and we could all hope that such an one would be the most learned and most impartial being under the sun. To imagine, however, that every critic who writes on musical matters shall have gone through a course of harmony, and counterpoint, orchestration and form ; that he shall have studied the art of singing, and have a practical acquaintance with the difficult task of placing and producing the voice, with the still more troublesome after-study of 'expression' and 'style' ; that he has mastered the *technique* of pianoforte-playing, and is proficient in the principles of good organ-playing ; that he knows the violin, the viola, the violoncello, and double bass, with their

wonderful methods of phrasing, and stopping, and tuning, and fingering; besides being acquainted with the peculiarities of shape, tone, compass, effects, history, and capabilities of the number of instruments known collectively as the 'wind' family, would be to imagine a most improbable thing; and, however desirable such a store of knowledge might prove, it is, we fear, an amount of wisdom to which few, if any, critics could lay claim.

Nor, indeed, can it be from any such view that criticism is conducted in England. A process of comparison is brought into play, and artists are not judged upon their absolute merits and individuality, but instead have their artistic standing gauged by, and made dependent upon, their reviewer's store of musical 'recollections.' Whether such a comparative method of criticism, variable as it is apt to be according to the extent and character of such a critic's 'recollections,' is preferable to a system by which every artist seeking public favour shall be judged on his merits, and by writers having a practical acquaintance with the several branches of Musical Art, and not mere 'recollections' of artists' doings, is a question which ought to be decided. At present a man or woman (for there are women

who 'do' the music for certain papers—indeed, till lately one of the leading musical periodicals was edited by a lady who knew nothing about Music) has only to boast of a few years' drawing-room or other 'recollections' of past musicians, and to be able to talk about present-day musical doings, to be regarded as competent for any censorship that may be open. There need not be any practical musical knowledge, either technical or creative; indeed, the writer could mention many directions from which criticism in musical matters is wont to spring, where such a condition is precisely that which would be met. It would be a curious study, for example, to arrive at the actual qualifications of those who write the criticisms for the London newspapers alone! That, however, one who takes upon himself the responsibility of passing judgment on Musical Art and Artists should be possessed of some greater knowledge than that of a few years' musical recollections is clear. It is manifestly unfair to so well-deserving a body as musicians, to place them at the disadvantage of being criticised and written of by individuals who are so ill qualified for their work; and it cannot surprise us that musicians complain of the

existing methods of the Press in regard to themselves. They, men and women who have devoted years and years of their lives to the study of particular phases of Art, are discontented at being frequently misrepresented —being credited with qualities and faults which they do not possess, while their favourable points remain undiscovered. The musician—the professional, of course—does not object to criticism, nor, indeed, would he like to see an institution which should do so much to weed and to purge the profession of all that is unworthy, done away with; but, he says, 'Do give us critics and censors who, either from training or the gift of rare musical perception, can do us and themselves justice.' Superior criticism acts as a sure check both to impostors and imposition, and for this reason, out of many, the *bonâ-fide* musician is in favour of the system. Of course we shall never have critics who will be capable of administering lessons, and giving hints to our Joachims, Piattis, Hallés, Santleys, Costas and Stainers in their several fields of work, but it would be a great gain to have critical notices of the performances of such artists written by folks who are capable of appreciating what they hear, who can do justice to such

talent, not covering up their criticism with a cloak of comprehensive terms of approval and 'safe' remarks, which neither instruct nor enlighten the outside public.

The critic we would wish to see general need not be a Reeves or a Santley, although he might, consistently enough, have a real acquaintance with the principles of Singing. It is easy to talk and write about 'throaty' singing, and the voice not being 'properly produced,' but it is an exceptional thing to find people, outside those actually engaged as singing-masters, who can detect a rightly from a wrongly produced tone: nor is it libelling our critics to say that their recriminations on this point are probably far oftener delivered from a comparative point of view—such, for instance, as their recollections of past vocalists—than from any specific knowledge of the singing art.

Again, such a critic, without being a Macfarren or a Sterndale Bennett, might well have some theoretical strength, knowing the scores of the 'masters' with their varying characteristics, while, as he would take upon himself the settlement of any disputed points of theory which might present themselves, an acquaintance with the treatises of Albrechtsberger,

Berlioz, Fux, Richter, Ouseley, and others, would not be found out of place. In short, therefore, what is needed is more practical knowledge and sounder discrimination on the part of the critics.

How much more promising would the future of Musical Art in England appear were it assured that the standard of its criticism could be raised. For, as has been already stated, the future of Musical England rests in a great measure with the critics and their criticism. They can influence its course for good or for evil. The life or death of Music as an art is in their hands. It is in their power to stamp out the false and to encourage the true principles of the Art, and according as their leanings are towards the right and the wrong, so far is English Musical Art improved or corrupted. Truth and Perfection should be the critic's Ideal, and in the pursuit of his duties his one aim should be to proclaim the Truth and to expose all that is false. He serves the Art well who, in his capacity as a critic, throws aside all animus and personal feeling, and contents himself with admiring, explaining, and recording the merits of all that is laudable and good either in substance or in the performance, raising his voice in

blame of that which is unworthy and unmeritorious. In numerous ways he can make himself felt. By refusing to notice and so advertise, unless it be in condemnatory terms, he can check the rush and manufacture of 'trash' in the form of 'songs' and 'pieces,' and so prove himself a purifying agent in the market of musical literature: he can guide and guard the public from the intrusions and encroachments which managers and *impresarii* do not hesitate to practise upon their too confiding supporters—the public: it is within his province to distinguish the charlatan from the true virtuoso, and to make a short life for those tricks and *ad captandum* displays which characterise the performances of the charlatan: the plans of cliques could be frustrated, and that abominable system of 'papering the house' would be of little avail in the face of sound criticism which refused to be led. In many such ways could an improved species of critic render good service both to the Musical people of England and to the Art which they so liberally patronise.

Our present method of criticism is, no doubt, a procrastinating one; but it would be hard to find a better substitute. There was a system in vogue some years since in Rome

which it might be dangerous to try here. That was a *vivâ voce* method by which conclusions of an artist's merit were arrived at then and there, and frequently at the cost of the evening's pleasure. While we can admire the courage of these critics, a revival of such impromptu criticism is not one of the old fashions which anyone, perhaps, would wish to see come in again—at any rate in Musical England.

Here is a tale concerning such impromptu criticism. Poggi, the most celebrated buffo-singer of his day, had a great dread of the Roman audience; for in Rome the critics pride themselves on their severity. The most cruel of all these were the abbés, who, sitting in the first row of the pit, each with a book of the opera in his hand, exclaimed with no bated breath at every error. Poggi, having been tempted by high terms and smooth words to accept an engagement at the Teatro de la Valle, took care to obtain introductions to some of these gentry. One abbé he selected as confidant: fed him, clothed him, gave him money, and in return was assured that he had nothing to fear, as the whole bench of critics followed the lead of the particular man whom he had so fortunately secured as a friend. In the first act all went well; the abbé cried

'Bravo!' and the others followed him. In the second act the singer was hoarse; a gentle hiss from the house frightened him, and he continued to sing badly. Suddenly his friend stood up on his chair in the pit, put out his wax-light, closed his book, looked Poggi in the face, and said: 'Signor Poggi, I am the mouth of truth, and thus declare that you are decidedly the worst singer that ever appeared in Rome! I also declare that you ought to be hooted off the stage for your impudence in imposing on my good-nature as you have done.' Poor Poggi retired amidst derisive hoots and roars of laughter!

CHAPTER II.

ENCORES AND ENCORING.

Adolphe Adam on English Encores—The Prospects of the Nuisance—Origin of the word 'Encore'—Its first Use—Pope's Reference—The Press and the Encore—How to Stifle it—Its Absurdity—Encore Riots—The Interests involved—The Audience—Wagner and Haydn on the Encore—The Artist's Relationship—The Accompanists—The Proprietor's Case—The Cure for the Evil—The Deliverer in the Soloist—The *Modus Operandi*—The Course for the Public—Fishing for Encores—Effect of the Encore on Art—Places for Applause.

My readers will, I am sure, excuse me if I now ask them to accompany me into an arena in which they play an active part, and where we may study a fresh phase of our Art, and one with which they are concerned in a greater degree than was the case in the previous chapter. There I dealt with what appeared to me a dark spot in our musical system. In the present chapter I shall apply myself to a stain

which is not only dark, but black—I refer to the wretched system of Encores and the custom of Encoring. We cannot lay this to the charge of the critics. It concerns the public, and that to a very large degree; and although in the course of my remarks I shall be found to shift the ungrateful load from its shoulders on to those of the musical performer, it is nevertheless with the public that much of the responsibility rests to remove completely so serious an obstacle to our musical life and growth.

Adolphe Adam, who deserves to be remembered as a musical writer and critic, as well as being the representative of a certain phase of French national art, says in his 'Souvenirs:' 'Le public anglais est grand redemandeur, et exprime son vœu par un mot français, comme nous par un mot latin.' The remark is true; we *are* great encorists, and it is much to be regretted that so unthankful a reputation has gained ground—not only on the Continent, but throughout the world.

What Adam wrote of us as a nation more than a quarter of a century ago, applies with equal truth now. What was then noteworthy has passed into an institution with us, so that no one would think of writing on

Music as it now is in England without devoting some remarks upon Encores and encoring. Some people argue that we are not much the worse for possessing the Encore, inasmuch as Music in England has little to boast of in the shape of institutions—structural or otherwise—and that to enjoy the reputation of even such a characteristic as the Encore system should not be unwelcome when our musical art can lay claim to no other peculiar—and they often add redeeming feature! But such people do not look upon our efforts with a kindly eye, and they fail to take that optimist view of things which anyone who had watched our musical work and doings for the past fifty years would—it seems to the writer—be perfectly justified in taking. The Encore system with all its insidiousness is beyond question, with us, worming itself into the body of our Art; but the evil has been discovered, and there is every reason to believe that our Art will live down the deep-rooted mischief, and that with an improved musical education we shall be less indiscriminate, less like parrots in our moments of emotional elevation, less susceptible to clap-trap and charlatanry, generally less obtrusive and demonstrative, keener judges of

effect, content to wait for times for discriminate applause, rather than to countenance an impulsive and haphazard system of approbation, to the detriment of the *ensemble* of our performances, and at the cost of our critical standing in the eyes of the musical world. Some croakers would have us believe that because the national taste is cankered with the eating sore of unrestrained and injudicious approbation, and because the majority of English concert-going people seem to be gifted with an intuitive propensity for wrong-doing in the matter of applause, invariably doing those things which they ought not to do, they would have us believe that our musical foundations are built upon sand; that though the structure may now be standing, it must inevitably some day fall, burying for ever in its ruins the archives of the Art contained in it. Yet such a view must be taken *cum grano*. Absurd and ruinous as this Encore system is, its depredations and its proportions are not on so formidable a scale but that some Alexander may be found with sufficient combating power to close with the monster, and if necessary annihilate it. Who the Alexander shall be, we may in the course of this chapter be able to determine.

It was once asked, and that publicly: 'Can anyone assign a reason why we use the French word 'encore' in our theatres and concert-rooms to express our desire for the repetition of favourite songs, etc.? and at what period was it introduced?' The first of these queries was surprising, and it was pointed out to the inquirer that he would not have made it had he known the meaning of the French word, while what he probably meant to ask was 'Why a French word should be used?' The second query was a more serious one, and gave rise to some correspondence. One reply was to the effect that it probably was first used at concerts and operas (*ancora* in Italian), where the performers and even the performances were foreign, and so became the fashion. Another reply of a somewhat facetious character, and emanating from 'the other side,' directed the querist's attention to the fact that—a writer in an English magazine, a few years previously, proposed that the Latin word *repetitus* should be used instead of encore. Among other advantages he suggested that the people in the gallery of a theatre (the gods), would pronounce it *repeat-it-us*, and thus make English of it.

We find Pope saying in 'The Dunciad:'

> 'O, Cara! Cara! silence all that train:
> Joy to great Chaos! let division reign:
> Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,
> Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense:
> One trill shall harmonise joy, grief, and rage,
> Wake the dull church, and lull the ranting stage;
> To the same notes thy sons shall hum, or snore,
> And all thy yawning daughters cry "Encore!"'

so that the French importation must have been in use at the time Pope wrote his satire. Shakespeare, however, makes no use of the word, as he probably would have preferred to have done, when he makes Bottom anticipate that the Duke shall say, 'Let him roar *again*, let him roar *again*,' where the jingle of 'encore' would have been obvious. The establishing accurately the date of the first use of the word in question is not, however, now of importance; nor need we stay to inquire why it is that we should go to the French for a word which has its equivalent in our word 'repeat,' while the French themselves disdain the use of the word we borrow for the especial purpose to which we have perverted it, and fall back upon the Latin '*bis—bis*' whenever they are so moved by the beauty of a song or piece as to wish for its

repetition. We shall be better engaged in viewing the Encore system as dispassionately as its provocative nature will allow, and making such suggestions as may appear best calculated to check, and if possible exterminate the nuisance. Not that the subject has never before been handled. On the contrary, it has been frequently attacked—I will not say thrashed out—yet all to no good, for the mischief is still with us. Writers in the newspapers, prints, periodicals, and even in volumes, are for ever hacking at the Encore. Sometimes they come down heavily upon it, and deal so severe a blow that the mighty beast is seen to stagger, yet only to immediately regain its equilibrium. More generally, however, it is a passing blow that is delivered—a process scarcely less hurtful than that of bullying the moon! The critics chiefly indulge in this petty warfare. When a singer declines to sing a second time, it is recorded that 'he very wisely resisted the demand;' or when a conductor or an instrumentalist proceeds to the conclusion of some symphony or concerto (heedless of the cries of ''Core! 'core!' manual commotion, or the further customary signs of approval expressed in the stamping of feet, the poking with umbrellas, and even cat-calls), we

are assured that 'he very properly declined to accede to the demands of the audience.' Yet with all this the Encore is still with us—not unassailable, but seemingly impregnable.

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That Encores are a nuisance all allow, and there is no doubt that many right-minded people—providing they had the authority to regulate the laws of musical entertainments—would suppress all Encores. There, however, is the rub. How shall we stifle the pest? The Press seems to have no power, for though it be for ever condemning the system, there that system remains as relentless and invulnerable as Achilles himself. Managers and artists have each in their turn made a stand, but they have hitherto been but poor warsmen, seeming to shrink from openly defying the public, upon whose favour they are more or less dependent. Singers as a rule think twice before they displease the public, and while they *profess* to be opposed to the Encore, they would prefer that the task of breaking it up should not devolve upon those who have to face crowds and mixed gatherings capable of growing excited and making things unpleasant.

The extreme folly of the system ought to prove its death-knell; and no doubt this would

be so, had we as a nation a sounder musical taste and more discernment. There would be no call then for a deliverance from an evil in respect to which neither conductor, manager, vocalist, nor instrumentalist is anxious to fill the *rôle* of deliverer. The question of Encores has no two sides to it, and while no end of arguments can be arrayed against it, nothing can be said in favour of the wretched system. If we look at the matter in a kindly light, and admit that the interruptions of whistling, shouting, cat-calling, barking, and barbarous noises which convert our theatres and concert-rooms into perfect pandemoniums, evince a real desire to have a certain piece repeated, such a view could not for a moment be allowed on artistic grounds, inasmuch as the Encore hinders the progress of a work, destroys the connection and dispels the illusion, while the utter absurdity of the thing is seen in the fact that during a performance of 'Lucia' at the Imperial Opera, St. Petersburgh, Mademoiselle Etelka Gerster was so rapturously applauded that she 'had to sing the whole of the mad scene over again;' which also means that if not checked, this Encore system will make it impossible for a conductor to proceed beyond the 'O rest in the Lord!' of the

'Elijah,' or the '*La ci darem*,' in 'Don Giovanni,' because there are certain people who say they could listen to these melodies all night!

But, it is well known that many Encores by no means imply a desire to hear the same thing repeated. It has been well pointed out, that if Mr. Sims Reeves sings 'My Pretty Jane,' the audience clamour for his return to the platform, not that he may give them 'My Pretty Jane' again, but because they want to hear 'Tom Bowling.' The artists are, of course, not blind to this, and although there is no systematic method for dealing with the attempted imposition, it is not at all an uncommon occurrence for a prominent vocalist to make a stand against it. Then we get one of those unseemly disturbances of which the following accounts are fair specimens, and which, representing as they do a certain phase in English musical life, are worth putting on record.

'The Theatre Royal and Opera House, Cork, was the scene of a most unpleasant and altogether unseemly occurrence on the occasion of the farewell concert of Mr. ———. The house was literally crammed, not excepting the stage, which was utilised by the management,

and all went smoothly and with good-humour until about two-thirds of the programme had been gone through. Signor —— at this time came forward to delight the audience with "Jack's Yarn," which he sang in such brilliant style that an encore was warmly demanded. Signor —— came to the foot-lights three times and bowed his acknowledgments, but nothing would satisfy the audience, or rather a portion of it, but the pleasure of hearing him sing again. The shouting and demands for an encore were continued for a considerable time, and Signor —— showed no disposition to come forward, but left the building for his hotel. Mr.——— came on the stage to play a pianoforte solo, which was next on the programme, but he was not permitted to do so. He then attempted to address the audience, but he could not be heard, and he wisely retired. The manager then came forward and attempted to speak, but it was still useless, and he had also to retire, as the "gods" and a few of the pit seemed resolved to have no one but Signor ——, and that their unreasonable demand should be complied with. Signor —— and others had responded to encores previously. Again Mr. —— attempted to

continue the programme, but he was not to be heard, and Mr. —— reappeared, and during a temporary cessation of the uproar was understood to say that Signor —— had gone to his hotel more than ten minutes before. This announcement was greeted with groans and hisses. Young Mr. ——, who had been favourably received previously, now came on the stage, but was not allowed to sing, the noise continuing as great as before from the small discontented portion of the house. Mr.——— appeared much annoyed at the treatment which his son had received, and at this portion of the extraordinary proceedings, his patience having become exhausted, he rushed on to the stage, and, taking his son by the hand, pulled him off, and both retired amid great shouting and noise. The above is just a repetition of what occurred here at a morning concert less than two years since, at which Signor —— assisted. The gifted basso had delighted those present with the "Bedouin's Love Song," refused to respond to an encore, and left the building, the concert then, as now, breaking up in confusion.'

On another occasion the scene of disorder was Liverpool. At a ballad concert there, Mr. ——, after singing 'Tom Bowling,' was,

of course, called upon to repeat it. Five times he came on the platform to acknowledge the applause, but those who had resolved to make their favourite vocalist do double work were not thus to be baulked. They refused to listen to Miss ——, who attempted to play a violin solo: they hissed and hooted Mr. ——, who, after endeavouring to obtain a hearing, led Miss —— from the platform, and it was not until several of the audience, who were content to accept the programme as it was offered to them, had left the room in disgust that anything like order was restored.

It can hardly be necessary to decry a system which, because a public servant refuses to be imposed upon, leads to such scenes as the above. They who attend concerts have no right to consider their own feelings at the cost of the comfort of other seatholders, and they certainly have no ground to ask, still less to demand, more than is set down in the programme. Nor have they a right to insist upon a repetition of a song or piece, which, though it may have pleased them much, may have had an opposite or only a moderate effect upon others. Did some Mæcenas engage, say, the Albert Hall, and throw the doors open to all who cared to enter at his expense, he would

be at liberty—though to exercise it would be bad taste—to have whatever pieces repeated he might choose; but the privilege could not be extended to him, or others, at public performances where other people's tastes and feelings should be as much our care as the study of our own comfort and enjoyment. It is reasonable to suppose that a large proportion of our audiences are those who are in the habit of hearing music, and who therefore are not desirous of taking very large doses of the same at every sitting they may attend. Is it just that the pleasure of these seatholders should be marred in order that the capricious taste of those who shout ''Core—'core!' after every piece, and who would have the whole programme repeated, should be gratified? Again, a large percentage of our audiences is made up of those who travel from a distance in order to attend the performance, added to which are the many who are invalided, or not in robust health, and with whom late hours become a consideration. Why should such risk losing their trains and other conveyances, or why should the latter be forced to retire at the small hours, in order that the demands of a boisterous few may be conceded? Yet such are some of the alternatives (if the programme

is to be heard in its entirety) which the uncultivated few—who, visiting the concert-room rarely, want an inordinate return for their money when they do go—would force upon the majority of the audience without regard to taste, sense, or reason.

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If the Encore deserves, as it does, to be swept away as a nuisance, it possesses equal claim to that oblivious treatment by reason of its absurdity. A system that fatigues artists, prolongs performances; that is unjust to performers, and disconnects scenes and passages which their authors have intended to be indissolubly connected; that makes it possible for inferior artists—if he and she can afford to purchase the *claquer*—to palm themselves upon the public as performers of unusual merit; which ordains that that exquisite part of the 'Elijah' where the truly angelic trio 'Lift thine eyes' is followed by 'He, watching over Israel,' should be seized upon as an opportunity for an outburst of noisy and riotous disturbance considerably opposed to the celestial beauty and solemnity of the situation; that refuses to let the calm devotional beauty of 'O rest in the Lord' shed its influence upon those who hear it—a system that permits all

this *is* an absurdity. Where shall the absurdity stop? Not only are single pieces now encored, but whole scenes are (as we have seen) repeated, and we shall perhaps go on until a complete act is demanded, and finally an entire opera will have to be re-played before the insatiable cravings of the encorists are satisfied. As a matter of fact the votaries of the nuisance themselves know no bounds, and one of the most recent and disgraceful proofs of this was afforded on the occasion of the production at the Strand Theatre of the new comic opera *Olivette*, when the lively dance called the 'Farandole' was encored, and redanced until the performers were compelled to desist through sheer exhaustion. And, of course, this will be the case nightly so long as the piece may run; for once concede at a first performance to encore a particular song, duet, or trio, and the custom is established. It matters not how the piece may be subsequently played or sung; the usual encore will be demanded, and, with very rare exception, obtained.

The author of an interesting and smartly written *brochure* on Encores that has come under my notice, and which it is to be regretted is not in everyone's hands, says that

'there are four distinct interests' concerned in this question. That of the Audience, that of the Artist, that of the Accompanist, and that of the Manager, or Proprietor. Upon all these the ruinous system makes heavy demands. Take the case of the Audience. A large section of our audiences are individuals with no extreme views concerning music—no decided opinions upon past, present, or future styles. They hear music on the same principle as they see the drama, *i.e.*, they like to be able to talk music, and to be able to say that they have heard the latest addition to our concert-room attractions. To such people the quiet enjoyment of an evening's music is of more importance than the hearing of this or that artist, or any old or new style of music. They are not for ever running after any one singer or any one instrumentalist, but they take music as it comes—sometimes in the shape of a ballad concert, then an oratorio performance, a Monday Popular Concert, a Crystal Palace 'Saturday,' a Wagner recital, a performance from the 'old' masters, and so on. They have no particular desire to applaud anything or anybody, their chief concern being the due and uninterrupted fulfilment of the programme as it stands. They

like the renderings by the prince of baritones. and the tenor gives them unmixed pleasure; nevertheless their evening's enjoyment rests not so much upon the tenor's lovely voice or the perfect vocalisation that characterises the baritone's singing, as upon the quiet and orderly bearing of the audience, and the manner in which the minority will behave itself in the matter of encores. The digestion of this passive section is more likely to be disturbed and their brains bewildered by the noise and uproar of those people who start an encore, and the many who follow them, than by the temporary loss of 'Tom Bowling' because the tenor had already given a perfect rendering of 'My Pretty Jane,' or by the non-hearing of 'The Leather Bottel' as the inevitable result of a fine performance of the 'Vicar of Bray.'

It is manifestly unfair that the enjoyment of such should be marred by the idiosyncrasies of those who delight in encores: nor is it right that those musical minds who attend performances in order that they may *think* musically, who go to the opera so that they may lose themselves in the scene of the play and its illusion, should be robbed of the enchantment, and have the chief element of their

enjoyment taken from them. Wagner himself is quite of this opinion, and he has even stipulated that at the end of each act, and there only, were the marks of opinion to be expressed, and this on the reasonable ground that such interruption would spoil the illusion and destroy the necessary continuity of performance. Haydn has given his views upon the matter in the following terms :

'Nothing can be more flattering to Haydn than the applause of the public. He has always striven most zealously to merit it, and has had the good fortune to obtain it oftener than he dared to expect. He now hopes, in the case of "The Creation," to meet with the same feeling which to his great comfort he has hitherto gratefully found exhibited towards him ; but at the same time he would beg that, should there be any occasion for the manifestation of applause, he may be allowed to consider such applause as a highly esteemed mark of approval, but not as a command for the repetition of this or that piece, because otherwise the close connection of the separate parts, from the uninterrupted succession of which the effect of the whole should spring, would necessarily be disturbed, and the pleasure of the public, which perhaps too favourable a repu-

tation has led them to expect. be necessarily weakened.'

Professor John Ella has also expressed himself on Encores generally. 'John Bull,' writes the founder of the Musical Union, 'with all his boasted liberty is the veriest slave in respect of the manners and customs of ordinary life. In sacred and secular works, familiar to the public, certain favourite pieces are stereotyped encores, quite irrespective of the style in which they are occasionally given. This I have witnessed on occasions when the music has been wretchedly sung, and the usual encore demanded, to the great disgust of the orchestra and its submissive conductor.

If the relationship of the system with the audience be an unsatisfactory one, its position in respect to the Artist is still more so. To say nothing of the commercial side, let us look at the matter on artistic grounds. If a singer knows that he (or she) is pretty sure to be encored for singing a certain song, it is not in the nature of things that he will tax his voice and energy to such an extent as to have comparatively no power left for the Encore, which he will be expected to render more effectively than the first effort. Experience tells the popular public vocalist that he must

save himself in certain songs and pieces so as to have a reserve of power for the demands which the immediate repetition of a song makes upon the highly trained vocalist—especially if that vocalist be a tenor singer. It is obvious, therefore, that either the original performance, the encore, or both, must suffer from a policy at once foolish and indefensible. If, too, the vocalist (having given an indifferent first performance of a song) fails from any cause to give an encore, the audience is robbed of that which it may have paid for, and had every right to expect, namely, the best efforts of the singer; while should the encore be duly given, it is most probable that the singer will have tired, and that it will fall flat upon the audience, especially if it be a repetition of the same song, which latter is the view which good taste tells us ought to be taken by a singer when his audience applauds him. And what I have said of the vocalist applies with equal force to our solo instrumentalists. Is it reason, I would ask, to demand a repetition of Tartini's *Trillo del Diavolo*, after it has been once played at express speed, in superb style, by a master of the violin? After an artist has thrown his whole soul into a perfect rendering of Ernst's

Elegy, is it considerate to ask him to repeat the piece? Yet this Encore nuisance amounts to this. It gives the solo instrumentalists no mercy—they must ever be at high pressure, and, like a locomotive, submissive to whatsoever rate of speed we care to exact from it! But we may leave the Artists, to return to them presently, believing as I do that with them rests more than with anyone else the future of this vexed question.

Let us look at the Accompanists. These play a sorry part in the affair. Where the soloists get glory, they get none: the soloist can please himself about an encore, the accompanists cannot: they must follow to whatever extent the soloists and the public elect to lead them. To take the case of our orchestral accompanists. We know how highly intelligent and able many of these are, and how their wide experience has made most of them familiar with their parts in whatever work or piece may be placed before them. Yet how heavily the Encore nuisance falls upon those who have already borne the burden and heat of the day with long rehearsals or tedious hours of lesson-giving, and whose evenings are converted into nights of toil because a certain section of the British public will have

its Encore! Is it to be wondered that such are frequently heard denouncing the Encore as a curse, or that they ofttimes hurl strong and not always Parliamentary epithets at the heads of those who are responsible for the grievance? If a singer sings for the popular taste, there is the honour and glory of being applauded to the skies, and sooner or later the consequent revision of his terms for engagements. The same with solo instrumentalists. But the poor Accompanists share in none of this, save so far as having to give extra labour without any counteracting advantage of praise or pay. They live at the four corners of London or even further, and their distant dwellings are not made more accessible at midnight than by the termination of a programme at some such reasonable hour as eleven o'clock, which might easily be the case but for the interference of Encores. In the face of all this we could scarcely wonder if some truth were found to exist in the statement of a certain writer, 'that some orchestral accompanists make a habit of playing as badly as they dare at the first performance of a piece likely to be encored, in order to avoid, if possible, the fatigue and annoyance of a repeat!'

The Manager, or Proprietor, has his troubles

arising out of the Encore nuisance. Increased gas bills; increased salaries for those whom the *claquer* has fairly, or unfairly, made prominent; modifications of arrangements and performances in order that the uproarious encores may be turned to financial account; the consequent disagreements with other artists, subscribers, etc.; conflicts with artists who have studied parts that cannot be attempted; delays and disappointments in producing long-promised novelties in the place of the well-worn melodies which are being 'encored nightly'—all this, and a host of other minutiæ which goes to make the life of an *impresario* one of the least enviable of callings, are the result of a wretched system that still flourishes amongst us, though all whom it concerns profess to be mightily opposed to it.

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But, to conclude. How shall we rid ourselves of this evil—an evil which, if we are to believe all that we hear, is at once a nuisance to the public, and the pest of the professional musician, harassing and tyrannising over him wherever he goes. Both sides suffer from it, both profess their strong aversion to it, both admit it to be bad; but in face of all this, and amidst the perpetual grumbling and growling

of both sides and the added remonstrances of 'the critic'—grumbling, by the way, that does its votaries no good and the nuisance no harm—the evil is enjoying a flourishing existence amongst us, notwithstanding that either side might put it down effectively and surely. The time is now when the matter is ripe to be dealt with. 'Encores or no encores?'—that is the question. We are the laughing-stock of musical Europe by reason of this absurdity: its ridiculous and injurious shapes have long been present to our eyes: all sensible musical people in this country have long since condemned it as a barbarism and an impediment to our musical progress: we are educating at great cost a new mould of English musician—why, then, not settle once and for all this question, lest so unthankful a heritage should descend to the next generation and hamper their musical life and growth as it has ours? Surely the next century musicians will feel more than grateful to us if we remove for them this stumbling-block.

To come to the point, the deliverer is to be found in the solo vocalist and instrumentalist. I have no hesitation in saying that it is the solo performer who creates and is responsible for the Encore, and who is better placed than any-

one else for giving the system a fatal blow; and if our leading musical artists hate the Encore system as cordially as they profess to do, they will exercise their power for their own sakes, and for the sake of our reputation as a musical country. And their efforts will not go unsupported. Managers could render effective assistance by adding at the foot of their programmes a polite note requesting the audience 'not to appeal for encores, as they cannot be granted;' or, to meet the case of an unanimous desire to hear a verse of a favourite song repeated, the announcement adopted recently by M. Rivière might with advantage be used. That ran as follows: 'In no case will a second piece be substituted, but simply a repetition of the last verse or the last movement'—a course that would prove somewhat discouraging to that class of person who applaud one song in order that they may get another from the same singer. And if such mild measures proved ineffectual, then a peremptory notice that 'no encores will on any account be allowed' might be tried, and there will still be left the hitherto untried test of bringing the matter into a police court, so that a magistrate might decide whether persons who purchase tickets to hear a concert are to

have their enjoyment marred by the clamour of those who presume upon a supposed right to have any pieces they please over again!

The public, too, would support the solo artist in his good endeavour. There yet remain fifty thousand that have not bowed themselves to the Baal of indiscriminate approval; these—and a larger section so tractable that it will accept no end of foreign talent of a calibre that they would disdain to tolerate were the same article presented to them in the more humble garb of *native* art—all would ultimately unite in aiding the solo artist in his regenerating mission.

The practice of fishing for Encores is one not altogether foreign with solo artists, and it is rife not only among young struggling artists with reputations to make (in which case it might seem reasonable), but the mode is much in fashion among a class of artists who, it has been rightly said, 'have no need of such resources to sustain their popularity.' It is the neck of such a practice as this that needs to be broken in order to give a blow to the Encore nuisance, and if our vocalists, etc., are in earnest for the present and future musical standing of the country which is according them its liberal patronage, they will throw

self-interests to some extent aside, and make an effort to wipe away one of the most serious of the blots that stain their country's musical reputation. Such a step will cost them something in the way of fewer plaudits and diminished royalties, but as their professions in respect to the Encore are so decided, it is to be presumed that they are willing to forego a little 'filthy lucre' and transient glory for the sake of the greater interest at stake. I see no *via media.* If the Encore is to be swept away —and it should be—the soloist must be the sweeper. It does not, I am sure, owe its present vitality to any encouragement it has received at the hands of Accompanists—who while quite prepared to give excellent work for moderate payments, are yet rightly opposed to giving a double meed of that work for the one remuneration. Our Managers and Proprietors cannot well be blamed for not moving in the matter—since they can only be expected to consider the thing from a commercial light, and their policy is to extract as much material as possible from the artists they engage, at the same time taking care to engage only those who can perform the not very easy feat of what is known as 'fetching' the public. Then there is that section of our audiences that

demands the Encore. The present vitality of the evil rests partly with them—partly with our soloists. The public is not to be blamed, or despised, for indulging in its strange freaks of ill-judged and misplaced approbation, inasmuch as it is yet uneducated; and, until it is trained to a healthier musical taste, it is but charitable to regard with a regretful mind the readiness with which it devours—even with avidity—that species of musical work which some of the Art's votaries, were they asked to give an opinion, would pronounce to be the veriest trash.

The solo artist, then, is obviously the only direction in which we can look for relief, and it is to be hoped that for their own sakes, for the sake of the cultivated section of the public, and for the cause of Art, our leading soloists, vocal and instrumental, will exercise the power they undoubtedly possess, and give us deliverance from this absurd and ruinous system of Encores. Let our Artists resolve never to yield to them, the Managers will soon be forced to follow and determine to allow no Encores, and the art-loving public will bring up the rear with their faces set against the evil; and then very soon the system, tenacious of life as it is, will be numbered among our dead and gone

barbarisms. Such a policy would not keep half-a-dozen people away from any concert; and if it did, their room would be quite as acceptable as their company.

Of the good effects of such a system much might be written. That the Encore lowers the standard of our musical excellence there is not the shadow of a doubt. Who that is in the habit of arranging programmes for performances has not heard singers of every calibre say—'Well, I don't think I'll sing that although it's the better music; put me down for so-and-so, as I always get encored in that.' And so it is that a vast quantity of meretricious trash is placed before the public, to the exclusion of much good music, with which it ought to be made acquainted for its own sake and for the sake of our musical future. The songs of Schubert, Mendelssohn, etc., and those of our own Moore, Dibdin, and others, are seldom to be met with in our concert programmes, though their soul-stirring tones and pure character render them immeasurably superior as works of genuine art to the clap-trap and rollicking song which at present obtains so largely among our audiences—a style of art-work better calculated to 'bring down the house' than it is to

sustain either our musical reputation or the fame of those who compose and sing them. To the craving for Encores, too, may be traced that very reprehensible practice of mutilating the songs in our standard works in order to wind up with a top note, given *con tutta forza*, that shall arouse 'the gods'—a practice which is as insulting to the genius of the composer as it is fatal to many a singer's voice, and injurious as a precedent for our rising vocalists; added to which is the prejudicial effects of such a custom upon the careers of many vocalists who, though not possessing veritable 'lungs of brass,' may yet, by reason of the rare beauty of their voices, combined with unusual good taste and expression, be peculiarly fitted for rendering music which this barbarous habit has placed beyond the pale of their rightful ambition, compelling such to give up all hopes of figuring in a profession which commends itself to them more than any other, and for which they would be well fitted but for the atrocious 'traditions,' as they are called, that have become allied to the art of singing, and which bid fair to remain inseparable with its future study and practice. When the Encore is swept away there is every hope that some of these

wretched 'traditions' will disappear with it.

To the question 'When and where would I have the applause come in ?' which my readers may ask themselves, the writer would answer ,At— the right time and place.' There is no néed to rob our performances of those demonstrations of feeling which give zest to the efforts of our public performers. The stifling of the Encore does not imply the suppression of those spontaneous outbreaks of applause which are the manifestations of an appreciative and a satisfied audience, and which it would be very undesirable to see extinguished, but it implies rather that a better understanding should be come to on all sides as to the *raison d'être* of the applause. Anyone who has attended a State Concert, where the performances are unaccompanied by applause, can answer for the painful blank following the renderings, and the evident want, after each piece, of a lusty 'huzza' in order to complete the effect. That is not an element we wish to see introduced into our performances : at the same time it is very desirable that when applause is given it should be at the end of a piece, at the termination of an act in an opera, at the end of a part in an oratorio, or at some

other convenient place in a performance where it will not mar the story and be out of place. Then such applause should be understood by performers and public to mean that the latter approves of, and has been gratified with, the interpretation given, and, while applauding the genius of the performer, it is anxious not that he should go over the task again, as a reward for having already done it well, but that his genius and application should be recognised, and be prompted to continued efforts towards artistic excellence. At the right time and in a reasonable situation applause becomes the salt to our performances, aud there are probably few people who would care to take their musical *menus* without it; but its injudicious use and misapplication becomes disastrous.

Once for all—let our Artists cease begging the Encore; let it become an understanding on all sides that a bow, and not another performance, is a sufficient acknowledgment for a burst of deafening applause, and the nuisance will soon disappear. All concerned will be the better for the change, and the art will have lost one of its most serious and destructive impediments. England seems determined to

make a show in the councils of Musical Europe. That being so, she cannot do better than rid herself of all influences that can be held to prejudice her reputation; and among these the Encore stands, I think, pre-eminent.

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH MUSIC.

'High' Church Service—Matins—The Gregorian Tones—'High' Celebration—Mass Music—Its Unsuitability—'Broad' Church Music—Revived Services—Organs and Choirs—Mixed Music—'Low' Church Music—Charity Children — Poorness of Services — Church Music a Necessity—Hearty Services—Unity of Style wanted—Musical Training for the Clergy—Work for a Commission of Inquiry—A General Hymn-Book—The Duties of the Congregation—Unison Singing Desirable—More Regard for Congregations—Cathedral Music Unsuited for Modern Church Services—An important Question.

It is a great leap from Encores to no Encores. Yet that is the step which I will ask the reader now to make with me. Let us leave the theatre and the concert-room, and go to the Church, and inquire how Music fares there. The inquiry may not be a short one; indeed, it must take some time and space to weigh the bearings of a question at once so important in character and extensive in range. But we

must not be deterred. The musical reputation of England rests not a little upon its Church music, and the reader will remember that when we pride ourselves upon our so-called English school, or style, it is from our 'Service' and Anthem music chiefly that we derive this importance. At the present day there is no English school, but English music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a distinctive character which could not be claimed by any contemporary music, and which has not been successfully revived in the present day, although many attempts have been made in later years to imitate its admirable style, simple grandeur, and religious character. The ingredient which has given the works of Gibbons, Purcell, and Boyce their enviable flavour seems to be lost to nineteenth-century composers, although the field of music has vastly increased since Purcell's day, and the means of disseminating musical knowledge are infinitely superior to what they were. We can write more florid Church music, more showy music, but we cannot get that true ring into it which is the characteristic of our old cathedral music. A consideration, then, of a phase of our Art which is as closely associated with our every-day life as is our Church music,

becomes of some interest, especially when we find that a hitherto incomparable point in our Art has become one of its weak and impoverished places. Let us at once proceed with our subject—Music in the English Church of to-day—one of the most important of the phases in which our Art presents itself.

Of the past history and character of religious music in England we need say nothing. It will suffice if we limit our remarks to the present, and, as far as possible, the future aspects of the subject. We may consider, for instance, the prevailing fashions in Church music—with the kind of musical services that most frequently obtain; and can then ask ourselves how far such efforts meet the object in view, and whether it is possible, or not, to improve the present order of music in the Church.

It is the custom in some churches to divide distinctly the Morning Service into the offices of 'Matins' and 'Choral' Celebration. The service of Matins embraces that portion of the Morning Prayer from the introductory sentences to the end of the Collects, with a sermon —the music being of a fairly congregational character, providing the congregation is not a little musical and thoroughly *au fait* at the

'tones' and 'endings' and 'inflexions' involved in an adherence to the 'Plain Song Manual.' The music employed is chiefly Gregorian, but a little Anglican music, say, for the Psalms or Canticles, is sometimes also used.

But, whether the music to 'Matins' be either strictly Gregorian in its character, or be it a mixture of the two styles, the ingenuity of the congregation is, we repeat, not a little taxed to join with much satisfaction to themselves in the musical part even of the 'first service' of many churches of this 'high' type. It is, we know, the custom to talk of the 'congregational' character of Gregorian psalmody, and no doubt that style of music could be most judiciously turned to account in all churches and chapels throughout the land, were some system laid down which should be general, and were the speed, the arrangement, and the accompaniment of the chants not left to the mercy of every dabbling organist; but until some such *fixed* system is adopted with these tones, it is more than probable that they will continue to be as they now are, quite as misleading, quite as difficult to grasp, and quite as uncongregational as are Anglican chants and tunes. And if this be true of the

originals, much more might be said against that 'blind worship of square and diamond-shaped notes' which impels imitators to invent endings and compose chants, *supposed* to be like the ancient tone.

Again, what is needed with Gregorian psalmody, and indeed with the Anglican too, is some fixed methods of 'accent' in the one, and 'pointing' in the other. The writer has stood in the midst of congregations in several London and country churches, where the Gregorian psalmody is in use, and has been struck not with the heartiness and freedom with which those around him have joined in the Psalms and Canticles, but rather with the difficulty which the majority have experienced in even occasionally fitting the words to the tone. And this arises from the want of some established and recognised edition of the 'Gregorian Manual,' issued under authority, with the Psalms, etc., properly punctuated, and accented to suit the Gregorian tones. Such a fixed method would prove useful. The ingenuity displayed by many organists and choirmasters in their dealings with these hymns of the Church, and the 'variety' they bring to bear upon their treatment, is no doubt remarkable; but unfortunately that wonderful

cleverness does not assist the congregation in its service of praise, but rather disturbs and frustrates it, and renders what should be an united effort nothing more or less than an exhibition by the choir and organist.

This is not what is wanted. The objects of all such sacred song is that each individual may praise according to the best of his and her ability; and we repeat, the best medium for such service is, in our judgment, that which the commonly called 'Gregorians' afford: but then there must be some recognised Manual of such chants, and the accompaniments thereto should be those written by an acknowledged musical authority on the subject.

It is urged that for the sake of variety and to prevent monotony it is permitted to organists to overlay these ancient tones with their extempore harmonies, but it is not clear that the remedy is not worse than the evil. Most of those who attend churches where Gregorians are sung, hear the same tones only occasionally: surely any monotony which might arise from such experience is not compensated for by the uncertainty and unintelligibility which is continually being brought about by the variations of the organist, and which, as has been said, go so far to prevent unity of effect.

When some much-needed reforms are adopted in the treatment of the Gregorian chants: when organists' accompaniments are less florid, and when the several 'tones' and 'endings' are (with the aid of cheap editions of one authorised version, and unadorned 'giving out' on the organ) made more familiar to the popular ear: when their melodies are as well known as 'Luther's Hymn,' the 'Grand' Chant, 'Sun of my Soul,' etc., their suitability to the Church of England service, their grandeur, their means to an end, both for 'young men and maidens, old men and children,' will not be questioned.

Matins being ended and the Choral Celebration begun, everything is done to bring the worshipper to a higher appreciation of this the highest act of Christian worship. As a means to such an end, music is used. It is an accessory which is calculated to afford a sentiment that is quite appropriate to the situation: the grander such music can be, the more, it is said shall it assist the soul in its act of worship and communion: *the worshipper is asked not to be led away by the heaven-born harmony*, but rather to let it convey to him, or her, the idea of an altar of altars, and of the never-ending praise of those who worship thereat.

It is not surprising that it should be desired that the music at this service should be of a high character, and that it cannot be too effectively and efficiently performed. To this end the compositions of the 'great masters' have been largely drawn from, while the assistance of professional musicians is secured to interpret these works. These scores were, of course, not originally written for the English Church, and were not intended to be sung therein: nevertheless, publishers have not scrupled to adapt to them English words, and clergymen have not hesitated to use both music and words in their church services. Works which were composed in the first instance for the purposes of the Roman Mass are necessarily complicated and extensive, and require no little skill and practice to perform. It is obvious, therefore, that the congregation is completely shut out from participating in the musical part of this service. The Kyrie, we admit, is not the Roman 'Kyrie' in the work, but is one generally arranged on some phrase occurring in the score, which phrase is as a rule unknown to almost every member of the congregation. As to the Credo, the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, the Gloria, etc., these are given in their entirety just as they

appear in the score of the work, the only difference being that whereas in the Roman Church they are sung to the Latin words, in the English service the music is rendered to (we cannot say appropriate) English words. For any worshippers to join therein is, therefore, out of all question; moreover, their province is, as we have seen, not to do so.

How long this species of English Church service will last, how long men and women will remain to be merely sympathetic worshippers and submit patiently to a system of dumb devotion, how long the plain injunctions of the Prayer Book will continue to be defied by priests and people alike, for the want of some combined action and vigorous reformation on the part of those most concerned—namely, the musical and clerical element—are points difficult to answer. That Church music, as it is found in this section of the Establishment, needs amendment there is no shadow of a doubt; and sooner or later the subject must be considered, from all points, by those in authority.

The beauty of a Mass by Schubert, or Mozart, or Cherubini, rendered as such works frequently are in our London churches with orchestral accompaniments (or if not that, with

the orchestral effects picked out at the organ by able organists), cannot be denied; on the contrary, to sit in one of our churches when a sacred composition of the kind by such masters is being performed under circumstances which are sacred too, is an exquisitely beautiful experience which no words can well express. The grand effects of harmony, the ever-varying tints of tone, the contrapuntal skill and learning, the streams of melody, the thrilling chords and sweet cadences—they affect all; but on the majority of constitutions they have an overwhelming influence, and it is on account of this influence that the introduction of such scores into the English Church service is mischievous. The *character* of such music, apart from any question of words, is unsuited to our Church service, and it provokes emotions which are probably opposed to those which even the most advanced church-goer would prefer to have uppermost at the time of celebration. In the Roman service, in which so much depends upon the 'effect' that can be produced on the minds of the prostrate multitudes, the wonderful music may be said to be 'at home;' but it is quite out of place here in the English Church Service.

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Let us now consider the musical aspects of a medium style of service.

As an institution this musical service is of maturer growth than the former, which is still young; but the white surplice movement—the age of choir-stalls, improved hymn-tunes, psalm-chanting, with organs downstairs, date back some twenty-five years. These appurtenances were to be met with in the several cathedrals and a stray parish church only, but now they are the rule and fashion in nine churches out of every ten.

This medium style savours of the 'cathedral' service, and seems to have borrowed no little of its popularity from an adherence, more or less strict, to cathedral usage and custom in matters musical. But it is bound by no prescribed limits, as is the cathedral service. Thus the music is either Gregorian or Anglican, or a mixture of both, the Psalms are chanted or they are not; at some places they are recited in the morning and sung in the evening—at others *vice versâ;* here the Canticles are sung to some service—there they are chanted to a single, a double, or a quadruple chant; at some churches anthems are necessary, in a neighbouring church they are tolerated only, while in the adjoining district they are

objected to strongly; in one service the vicar speaks his part—at the next his curate sings it; the singing is all in chorus at some churches, at others the antiphonal mode is adopted for treating the Psalms and hymns, while we have even heard this latter method carried to the extreme of rendering each verse of the Psalms antiphonally—the division being made at that part of the verse where the colon occurs. In the north of London the hymns are taken at a galloping rate: in the south they are sung at a snail's pace, the effect of which is not unlike wailing!

This style of service has other distinguishing features, not the least marked of which is the skilful manner in which it links the past with the present, and bridges over as it were, the tastes of a past age and the sentiments of the present. This praiseworthy desire to please all parties shows itself in numerous ways, which vary in every parish and with every parson. Thus in the course of my experience I have seen that church functionary, the clerk, put to all sorts of duties, not because he was particularly fitted for or conspicuously clever in any of the offices which were thrust upon him, but because being what we may term the *peoples* man, and no longer necessary or

desirable in his old capacity of clerk, his presence in any other *rôle* was a sort of guarantee (and was looked upon as such by the conservative elements of many a congregation) against any too formidable strides on the part of his musical and reforming vicar. Though his 'Amen' could no more be heard amid the exertions of a 'restored organ' and a surpliced choir Mr. 'Clerk,' stood good proof that, marked as was the transformation in the Church's service, no great harm would come while *he* remained on the Establishment. The 'Renovation Committee' may have swept away his *sanctum sanctorum* behind the clock in the west gallery; the 'So-be-it's' of the somnolent congregation would probably no longer find in him their mouthpiece, yet he remained, more for the sake of appearance than utility, receiving his same liberal stipend for a less active participation in the Church service. I have seen such a 'clerk' bandied about from pillar to post till at last a snug place was found for him behind the choir-stalls of a modernised church, where, seated in an ecclesiastical chair, stately and roomy enough for any two archbishops, this hitherto active official now enjoys a career of comparative ease and quietude. Another such functionary

have I seen deposed, and installed in a totally different *rôle* from that to which he had been appointed some half-a-century previous by a strongly-Protestant body of parishioners. This was at a Kentish church, where the influx of a young and most estimable man, fresh from college, and ripe with doctrinal notions and practices of a tolerably 'high' type, lent a new aspect to things. The usual reformations were begun: the fine Norman church was cleansed; hideous structures of a bygone age were demolished (among them being the clerk's *sanctum* which came to grief amid incoherent utterances of the clerk concerning Ritualism, Popery, and Anti-Christ); the usual resistance meetings were organised and held; the clerk refused to be comforted: until at last all difficulties were solved. A hearty Church service now reigns supreme, and the old clerk, who refused to lend his hand to any 'Puseyite pranks,' as he called them, has been cajoled into heading a procession of clean-faced boys in white surplices, and it is not improbable that he may some day be the bearer of an uplifted jewelled processional cross.

Thus, though the revival in the conduct of the Church's service may have deprived many such functionaries of their duties, it has inter-

fered but little with any of their salaries, for their aid and presence have too often proved of service to many a worried vicar, in dealing with the complaints and questionings of a panic-stricken congregation. The part they play may be less active, but it is, nevertheless, an important one.

Then there are the several degrees of musical efficiency which are attained by this medium party, which does not deem it necessary to adopt or work to any fixed standard of excellence in their musical doings. They often scorn the notion of appearances, and are, as a rule, deaf to the matter of effect. Frequently enough, when choir-stalls have been fixed at some expense, and at no little trouble, arising out of the granting of 'a faculty,' the clergyman will refuse to countenance the removal of the organ from the gallery, on account of its being, as it stands, an ornament to the church, and because the effect of its gilt pipes would be lost in its removal downstairs. Henceforward there is the inevitable trouble and difference of opinion between choir, organist, and, we may add, organ. The organist and his instrument constitute a powerful agent; not less powerful (and too frequently more defiant) is the choir: both are anxious to do

their best, and in their endeavours to secure that most desirable end—to win over the other side to its way of thinking and rendering—the 'singing of praises *with understanding*' not infrequently gives way to a general musical *mêlée*, in which choir, organ, and congregation get into a condition of glorious confusion, while the parson looks on undismayed and apparently unaffected!

But both organ and choir afford food for reflection, especially as we find them under the auspices we are now considering. Here we meet with little regard as to the fitness of things; but the prevailing idea seems rather to be the utilisation of all surrounding talent that can with the slightest pretence be termed musical. Thus we meet with choirs partly paid and partly voluntary; mixed choirs, that is choirs with male and female voices; then there are partly dressed choirs, wherein two rows of bright little boys in surplices are supported in their musical exertions by older folks of both sexes in ordinary clothing; choirs wherein boys' voices are regarded as intolerable, especially where the vicar's family happens to be a large one, and consisting chiefly of girls; choirs with all boys and no men or women; choirs whose ranks are re-

cruited through the advertisement columns of newspapers ; and those less fortunate choral bodies which secure no greater talent than is afforded by the neighbouring national school, the Sunday-school, and the parochial young men's club and institute, talent—by the way which is rarely worth the seeking, much less the time which it takes to shape the same into the merest semblance to form.

Organs and organists are often enough as indefinite in their views as are the clergymen of the section of the Church whose musical rule we are now considering. Many parsons care for organs, many do not, and the 'King of Instruments' is necessarily often found in various degrees of age and condition. It may be an instrument of the period of 'Father' Smith or one of the modern Brycesons: to the Incumbent the real point is whether there is an organ, or is he to be at the trouble and expense of getting one built? With the possession of such an article the chief point is supposed to be gained; the clergyman secures a right to the instrument for his family, and if the post of organist happens to become vacant, and he can boast the possession of a 'better half' or a daughter who can 'play' the pianoforte, one of these is ensconced into

the proud position of organist. Henceforth the control of matters musical is vested entirely in the hands of the estimable lady; the choice of tunes and pieces is made subservient to her capacity; the organ seems to be all 'sesquialtra' and no pedal; the whole thing, in fact, becomes weak in the extreme, to say nothing on the score of reverence. When it is not the above picture that is presented to us, it is the equally distressing one of a fine organ in the hands of a skilled and judicious performer prevented by various reasons from giving scope to their respective powers. There are many such organs and organists in London, to say nothing of the country; and many metropolitan churches could be named whereat the musical part of the service is neither worthy of the organ, organist, or the religious ceremony which it is supposed to aid. Added to this, the music (too often selected from the unmusical point of view of the clergyman or his wife) is generally of a kind least calculated to induce religious feelings or to create and foster a taste for Church music. Intricate double, or it may be quadruple chants are attempted for the Psalms and Canticles, when simple single chants would be equally as fitted, and far less difficult to render. Kind

friends go to the pains of unearthing chants they may have heard on their holiday tours, they produce effusions of amateur composers, or they go to the extent of jotting down their recollections of a certain tune to which they add some accompanying parts—all these, most of which it need hardly be said are hideous, are brought under the notice of the clergyman, and are performed in some part of the service. The organist, if he is a well-known performer, has probably already grown so accustomed to the bad state of things as to offer little or no remonstrance to the performance of these musical scraps—caring for little else beyond his Voluntaries and his salary, and not depending upon his church duties for his reputation; while, if the holder of the office happens to be an amateur, or, what would be still more unfortunate a professional just entering upon his career, any remonstrance on his part would probably jeopardise his position.

And all this variety, uneasiness, and misunderstanding is quite characteristic of the musical part of this medium service, and may be traced, as a rule, to the clergymen whose views on musical matters are as elastic as are their religious opinions. But the liberality of idea answers less well with our Art than with

Theology; and so it is that from a musical point of view this service—not forgetting the strange compounds of which it is made up—Old English music—selections from French, German, and Italian Masses, Gregorian Tones, modern German and English works, Anglican chants, 'arrangements' from operatic works and 'ballet' music, to say nothing of the efforts of the local composers which abound in every parish—such a strange concoction which is pressed into the 'lists of music,' apparently without regard either to decency or reason, may well be looked upon as a real infliction. Nor can the plea of utility be urged in justification. This Service is actually little more 'congregational' than that we have before considered; while it lacks its attractiveness. In the one the worshipper is no more happy, by reason of the mixed and 'jumbled' musical arrangements, than he would be with the exclusiveness of the other; but of this we will say something anon. Taking all things into consideration, this 'medium' Service must be regarded as a musical mistake; and even less satisfactory than either of the other two styles of Church musical Services.

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The Third style of Service—that is, the

musical aspect thereof—may now be considered. So little has been said herein in favour of either of the former Services, that it might be thought that a meed of unqualified praise had been reserved for this last of the divisions into which the Church of England Services settle themselves. No one, probably, who desired to be an impartial witness would admit that the rude strains of an ill-governed body of charity children could rightly be termed Music, or could well deserve the title of 'Praise;' whilst the majority would, we venture to hope, be slow to persuade themselves that the efforts possessed any special religious value, or were of any artistic merit in influencing and prompting those who were in the habit of listening thereto to any very extraordinary deeds of charity and good work. Yet for many years a large proportion of the churches of England have echoed with the shoutings of flocks of school children, presided over and led by older but scarcely more useful folk whose creative faculties have been well taxed in discovering bass, tenor, and 'seconds' parts to those melodies which the younger members have been taught by rote to shout. Farrant's familiar chant to the *Venite*, with the well-worn double chant known as

'Mornington' for the *Te Deum;* the 'Glorias' to the Psalms; a couple of hymns of antique flavour, which, after having been introduced by the presiding clergyman in a roundabout harangue, are played over on the organ, then partly read out, and finally rendered by those present—these, with perhaps a musical setting of the Responses to the Commandments and a Doxology constitute the musical element of a fairly representative Service of this third class. The artistic value of the selection of music is hardly worth considering; and when it is remembered that the rendering of the fragments devolves upon a few 'croakers' in the gallery, aided by the charity children, it becomes a little marvellous how congregations are found to tolerate—we will not say join in—such a real infliction, and one possessing so few, if any, corresponding advantages. For at such Services, though the music is simple even to monotony, and though it is rendered in the most commonplace style, yet the worshippers do not join therein any the more heartily and generally than is the case with worshippers at a cathedral or an elaborate Service. A little 'mumbling' is heard here and there in the congregation—only the 'croakers' in the gallery with the charity

children give signs of life with their throaty and ill-trained voices; and altogether the musical part of the Service suggests the reflection, that if what is done theologically be not worth more attention than that attempted musically, then the exertions of such Christians must be of but little avail. The spirit of Bishop Kenn is clearly not their spirit. They cannot well sing—

> 'Sweet music with blest poesy began,
> Congenial both to angels and to man;
> Song was the native language to rehearse
> The elevations of the soul in verse;
> And, through succeeding ages all along,
> Saints praised the Godhead in devoted song.'

To cite instances of churches of this class in the Metropolis—to say nothing of the country, where the musical part of the Service is not given with common decency—would probably make many reverend gentlemen and their organists feel extremely uncomfortable: yet it would be no hard task to form a list of some fifty London churches whereat the musical attempts Sunday after Sunday are (from various causes) an outrage upon good taste, and a seeming mockery and insult to Him to whom the Service is offered—resembling nothing so

little as the 'Praises with understanding' of a Christian community.

Nevertheless, we have the reflection that if little is attempted in the way of music at such Services, then less harm can be done to the cause of Music than would be the case at those churches where a great deal is essayed and that amount is badly done. Though Musical Art and religious fervour can be but little served by the performance of a few lazily resolved chords and snatches of melody in the shape of a voluntary, or by the drawling of a pair of hymn tunes and chants—to say nothing on the score of effect brought about by the preponderance which the 'charity' treble too often bears over the uncertain doings of the alto, tenor, and bass element—the ear is not outraged by an almost unending effusion of music of all kinds, as is too often the case in the *medium* Service. There is at least consistency in what is done by this third party, for though its musical doings may be weak in the extreme, it is but the continuation of an old policy which the authorities do not seek to disclaim, or desire to modify and improve. Should a clergyman gifted with musical discrimination happen to urge the question of improvement, as was the case recently at a

certain London church, he would probably meet with no other reception than that accorded to the learned holder of the Incumbency of which I speak. This took the shape of a strenuous opposition on the part of a majority of those present, with a warm volley of abuse from some of the remainder, whose views—so far as these could be gathered—concerning music were that it was as much out of place in a church as a psalm-tune would be in a tap-room, or a prayer or sermon in a playhouse. It is this spirit that keeps this class of Church Music alive and in its present poor condition. Reformation in this direction must of necessity, therefore, be slow: and the above account of an effort towards improvement would suggest that projects for securing so desirable an end should be approached cautiously, and only after having first learnt the views of the members of the congregation on the subject.

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With this cursory glance from a musical standpoint at the Church of England Services, not a few points suggest themselves. Thus, it is at once apparent that Music in various forms, styles, and degrees of quantity and quality constitutes a more or less important feature in our religious Services. It is equally

clear that no fixed plan or law guides or governs the question of Music in the Church; hence follows the glorious confusion in which the subject is enveloped. Every clergyman and every musician of the Church seems to 'do that which is right in his own eyes;' and so it is that much controversy is repeatedly occurring in respect to a matter on which it would appear that little or no diversity of opinion ought to exist. But with the discretion vested in the clergymen, such an unfortunate condition would seem to be inevitable. They no more than other folks can have escaped the influence of the great musical movement which has made itself felt all over this country during the past half century, and by which our religious Services (as well as our secular performances) have become modified, improved, and in some places much changed. Many clergymen and congregations have been completely 'led away' by this musical fever: a second section has travelled less wondrously: while a third party have brought up the rear with their bad time and tune—their belaboured renderings, asthmatical organs, and musical reminiscences of bygone days.

Yet all are agreed upon one point, which is that Music *per se* is a necessity in Divine Wor-

ship. The differences of opinion turn only upon the points of what that Music shall be; how much there should be of it; and when and where it should be introduced into the Service.

Now, the controversy on the subject of Church music has been a protracted one. From the time of the Reformation (and of course before it) there have been factions, and the *fanatici contra la musica* who have detected sin in all and every form of Church decency, and who have even beseeched Parliament to 'put down all cathedral churches where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and trowling of psalms from one side of the choir to another, with the squeaking of chanting choristers, disguised in white surplices': there are many who would extend our musical Services—many who would alter and lessen them. There are the admirers of the Gregorian tones and style of music who regard the Anglican style as entirely unworthy of the Church, if not, indeed, almost sinful; and, of course, there are the lovers of Anglican music, who look upon the resuscitated 'Gregorians' with as much favour as Gluck would probably view Verdi. Many persons like a Service at which they have nothing to do but listen; and again, there is

that large body of professing Christians who long for, and seek after what they vaguely term a 'hearty' service, and who would, no doubt, go far to find such an opportunity to give vent to their vocal impulses as Master Thomas Mace assures us was afforded to the worshippers in York Cathedral in 1644, 'where,' (to quote the lutenist's own words) 'they had then a custom that always before the sermon the whole congregation sung a psalm, together with the choir and organ; and you must also know that there was then a most excellent, large, plump, lusty, full-speaking organ, which cost, as I am credibly informed, a thousand pounds. This organ, I say (when the psalm was set before the sermon) being let out into all its fulness of stops, together with the choir, began the psalm. But when that vast conchording unity of the whole congregational chorus came (as I may say) thundering in, even so, as it made the very ground shake under us (oh! the unutterable, ravishing soul's delight!), in the which I was so transported and rapt up into high contemplation, that there was no room left in my whole man, viz., body and spirit, for anything below divine and heavenly raptures.'

With so many different opinions upon one

subject it. is not surprising that 'variety' should be a marked feature in our Church Services. Hence, where Tate and Brady's Psalms and Tunes are not now in fashion, 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' 'The Hymnary,' and such like collections will be found in its place: where Anglican chants are not sung with almost desperate intentions, there the Gregorians are wailed by an indifferent set of vocalists: where the Anthems and Services by such sound Church musicians as Purcell, Croft, Boyce, and others are not to be met with, there will be found settings for the Canticles by modern Church writers like Stainer, Sullivan, Tours, Smart, and Barnby: while for the 'Communion Service' all sorts of steps are taken to ensure 'variety.' Thus in one church the whole of that Service is given *vivâ voce:* elsewhere our own seventeenth and eighteenth century musicians are drawn upon: in moderately advanced churches the modern English Church music is preferred: while at some other Services those who attend them are treated to adaptations from, or Anglicised versions of French and Italian Mass Music; and not unfrequently has it been discovered that some of the most sacred passages in our Communion Service have been set to Operatic

and even Ballet music. Variety under such conditions is dearly bought.

Unity and uniformity are what is most needed to bring about a happier condition of, and to pave the way for an improved era in Church Music. The whole question wants calm consideration at the hands of clergymen and musical authorities who can bring a sound judgment, with wide parochial and musical experience to bear upon it; and this upon the basis of our improved musical condition and taste. The subject has been well and frequently ventilated in the Press, but the result is usually an influx of unimportant communications from that class of people who are ever on the *qui vive* for an opportunity to get into print and thus air themselves—their little whims and fancies. Sometimes an influential communication is made to the Press, and goes far to prove that a properly constituted Commission could, with much advantage deal with the question of Church Music. We have had enough of the controversial element, and the disseminating of various views and opinions, but few attempts would seem to have been made to bring about that much-needed unity and right understanding which ought to exist. The writer is scarcely sanguine that it would

be possible to devise a Service which, in its Musical bearings would commend itself to all parties and every individual member interested. That might be as undesirable as it would probably prove impossible ; yet that should not prevent steps being taken which would perhaps go far towards consolidating and strengthening Church parties and to healing differences which are to a great extent imaginary, and which involve no question of religious principle whatever.

In a Church which, like our Establishment, is so comprehensive, and whose Services are intended to include every taste, it is obvious that no hard and fast rules can be laid down concerning what portions of those Services shall or shall not be rendered musically. Just as at one time it was only the cathedrals which provided a musical Service—the popular musical taste being then in its infancy—so now, when the exception is to find an unmusical being, the demand for musical Church Services is correspondingly greater. No longer do the cathedrals hold a monopoly in this respect, for this has been visibly wrested from them by many of the merest village-churches throughout the country. Where this tide will carry the most ardent of

musical churchmen it is hard to say; but in the absence of some early interference and judicious action, it is not improbable that we may live to witness a return of the fashion of that period (1549-1662) to which they look back regretfully, yet hopefully, when 'the Lessons were sung in a plain tune, and likewise the Epistle and Gospel.' Yet, if such rules cannot with advantage be set down, there is ample scope left for the suggestions of a well-ordered Commission of the clerical and musical elements which could inquire into, report, and advise upon the vexed question. At no time have circumstances been so favourable to such an inquiry as at the present. Matters musical in the Church are now at their worst, and all unbiassed people would probably welcome a reformation; especially would those who have to regard the matter from a 'congregational' light rejoice at the prospect of a change which would generalise and bring uniformity into the Music of our churches. It is gratifying to learn that the clergyman is no longer to be a half-trained workman, knowing perhaps his theological tenets, but ignorant of a subject of which he should know much, especially when we remember how large a share that subject forms

in the services which he is sent forth to direct. Musical training among the clergy has long been sorely needed, and at length men of all shades of opinion are recognising and providing for the necessity. The Universities have taken the matter up, and the Board of Musical Studies at Cambridge suggests that Ministers should provide themselves with such an amount of knowledge of the subject 'as would enable them to exert their influence intelligently and in a right direction.' Inasmuch, therefore, as the unsatisfactory condition of Music in the Church is owing mainly to the inability of the clergy to judge between right and wrong—good taste and bad in the musical parts of their Services, such an encouraging step as that which shall the better qualify clergymen for their responsible duties cannot but augur well for the future of the Church's Services.

In the event of such a Commission as that described ever sitting, its attention could not be directed to any better end in general than that of securing uniformity and consistency in our Services by laying down an order or plan, which to some extent shall place the musical part as much within the grasp of average intelligence as is the Liturgical form of Prayer itself. No one has ever been heard to com-

plain of the monotony of the Prayer Book, which answers the requirements of all sections; why cannot there be a Hymn Book which shall become as general in our Church as is the Prayer Book? It has been well pointed out that 'a movement for the compilation of a new Hymn Book would be hailed with satisfaction by thousands of congregations in the land—a Hymn Book stamped with the *imprimatur* of the Church and rendered as obligatory as its liturgy; and surely with our many excellent divines and church musicians—the former at least unsurpassed in any period of the Church's history—such a scheme is not impracticable. There is no lack of Hymnals in use in our Church, but it would be hard to find one that is free from strained, biassed, and exaggerated sentiment. A new Collection should be as liberal and comprehensive in its character as are the Bible and Prayer Book, whose teaching our Hymns should, I think, embody and endorse; and it would be for the better were they founded more largely on Scripture scenes and subjects, lending as these would an undying charm of theme and expression—a quality that is sadly wanting in the efforts of many hymn-writers, whose effusions tell too plainly of personal sympathies, and not infrequently

wound susceptible and thoughtful Christians with their crude similes and unreal sentiment drawn from common scenes and everyday life.

As to the Tunes in such an authorised Hymnal, no better course could be pursued than that of including the best readings of the old and well-known tunes and melodies which have become familiar to old and young church-goers—such tunes, for instance, as the 'Old Hundredth,' Tallis's Canon to 'Sun of my soul,' 'Luther's Hymn,' with the little less known chorale, '*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott;*' 'St. Peter,' Cruger's tune, '*Nun danket alle Gott;*' the older melodies '*Urbs beata*' and '*Corde natus,*' and many other such undying strains without which no Hymn Book would be complete; and if new tunes were needed, there are happily among us Church musicians who are capable to compose these—and this in excellent style, and one that would be acceptable to all devout worshippers; for it must be borne in mind that though Church Music is in a bad way, that condition arises from no lack of Church musicians (whose style possesses an agreeable, if not quite the true ring) of Church Music, but from the want of appreciation and regard for such on the part of those higher in authority. A new Hymnal, and one that could

be used generally would be a step in the right direction—serving as it would to unite Church parties and give an impetus to Music in the Church in its best form—namely Congregational Singing. When the hymnology of our Church is placed upon some better basis than it now is, we shall probably hear less mumbling and more hearty Praise; there will be less apathy, less muttering and indistinctness, or even silence so far as the Congregation is concerned, which are the characteristics of the present system. Church-goers from the north may then visit southern churches; those from the east may go to the west, and find that though under strange roofs they were yet 'at home' in one of the most precious parts of the Service—one which, unhappily, is under existing circumstances shut out from many worshippers who are unable to join therein because they are hampered with a variety of Hymn Books and an endless supply of tunes and times with which the ear can never hope to grow familiar; or if it is not this it is the equally effective barrier of false delicacy in which the members of every congregation indulge, and by which the Hymns and Psalms are left to the care of a few bold beings in the congregation while the large majority look on

in amazement at such enterprise, and content themselves with an almost inaudible whisper as their share of the Praise.

With an improved Hymnal one of the chief defects in our Church Music would be removed. Praise is as much a part of the Service as Prayer, and it cannot be denied that from many causes, some of which I have touched upon the majority of many a congregation are prevented from giving expression to their Praise. It is that fact which causes so much contention, the laity urging rightly enough an argument that amounts to this: We want to do more ourselves, and not to have so much done for us. Here, I humbly submit, lies the secret of this vexed question. The people of England do not object to Music in the Church: they do not dislike a large share of that Music; but they resent the methods which reduce them to mere auditors, compelling them to stand, sit, or kneel to listen to the performances, solo and otherwise, of clergy and choirs who, in the matter of music, are often less well educated than the members of the congregation. A general Hymn Book would in a measure meet this difficulty, for the words of the hymns would become known, and the tunes would grow as familiar to the ear as

Dr. Croft's 'St. Ann's' and 'Hanover,' or Gauntlett's 'St. Alphege' or 'Melcombe' now are. There would then be no more mumbling and whispered Praising: the choir could fulfil its proper function—that of leading the singing instead of showing itself off: every congregation might literally lift up its voice of thanksgiving: anxious worshippers, and those who hesitate to attend church because they must not sing would have no more fears as to whether they will be able to join in 'this' or 'that' hymn, and whether the tune will be a 'new' one, or one known to them; in short, one of the most desirable steps will have been taken towards improving the matter of Music in the Church.

It might be well also to inquire into the question of the part which the congregation could best take in Church Music. With the present order of things, the clergyman's exhortatory phrase, 'Let us sing to the Praise and Glory of God,' might as well remain unspoken, since but a small percentage of every congregation get beyond the murmured Praise to which I have already alluded, and these few amuse themselves (and frequently others) by grappling after the alto, tenor, and bass parts, instead of being content to join in the melody

(or tune) of what is being sung. The desirability of singing in Unison cannot be too strongly impressed upon every congregation throughout the land. It is not the province of the congregation to sing other than the melody, and to do, or rather to attempt it —for this is what such efforts generally amount to—is to exhibit very bad taste. Many of our Church choirs too frequently give evidence of how difficult it is, even with one or two practices during the week, to render the four-part music in a manner fit to be heard. It is obvious, therefore, that Congregations cannot hope to succeed where the trained choirs fail, and this in itself should be a sufficient *raison d'être* for the adoption generally of Unison singing. Yet, on other grounds it might be supported. Did congregations unite themselves into one body of unisons, that might go further than any other means towards bringing about a radical change in our Church Services, and the providing of a new class of Music that should be within the grasp of all. And here the question of the fitness of 'Gregorians' steps in. It is not the beauty which it is alleged pertains to these Tones which has made them popular in our Services, so much as the fact that being

simple, easy to be remembered, within the compass of every voice, and unisonant, they have proved acceptable to every class: and under the improved conditions already mentioned in speaking of the 'high' Church Service, these resuscitated melodies ought to become general and take a standing place in the Church Service of the future. It is, probably, less difficult to chant the Psalms and Canticles to these Tones than it is to read them, and with the reading ability of the clergy of to-day scarcely so good as that of the time when Bishop Blomfield made his memorable reply 'that he would rather hear all the service well sung than badly read,' it is to be regretted that these Gregorians are not in use at every Church. For, let me repeat, the complaints which are constantly being waged against Musical Services are not directed, as is erroneously supposed against Music in the Church, but against a system which converts intelligent Englishmen into passive auditors instead of active worshippers. There might be, we repeat, much more Music in the Church's Services than there now is, provided it were of a kind that would enable the congregation to take a larger share therein; but while the major part of our Church Music

continues to be represented by Anthems, 'Services,' intricate chants with high reciting notes, and hymns that are converted into solos and quartetts, etc., in which the congregation cannot possibly share, there will be discontent in the camp and the laity will have cause to complain of the monopoly of the Service by clergy and choir. All are agreed that Music is an essential element in Church of England worship: the point to be decided is what shall be the character of that Music: shall it be Congregational or Un-congregational? The question is not, as is popularly supposed, one of a rectification of present frontiers, the throwing off of this or that musical setting, the using of Tallis or Merbecke—Anglicans or Gregorians: but the more important issue of the part the Congregation shall henceforth play in the Church Service, and the contest for some such improved method in the musical department as shall bring the Service more within the reach and requirements of modern worshippers, whose interest in the matter and capacity for regarding it are of a higher order than was the case with the congregations of three and four hundred years since, when the Cathedral Services—from which our Church Services are borrowed—were planned and

settled. Then was the time when the clergy and choirs had matters pretty much their own way, and when the very language of Prayer was not the language of the congregation. Theology and Art have, however, combined to produce a worshipper of a much higher calibre, who would appear to have a real grievance in the form of a common failing on the part of the clergy to realise the fact that the Church of England Services are for the laity, and not alone for the clergy and their choirs. The cure for this evil would to a great extent be found in the general adoption in our churches of singing in Unison.

Any step that might be taken which would place the choir and congregation on a level, would at first sight appear to be a too severe blow to our present Church Music; but the time is probably not far distant when we shall have to face a radical change in the Musical bearings of our Church Services. It is becoming too evident that the apathy of our forefathers in this respect has passed off, and a more becoming spirit has taken its place. No longer are congregations willing—although at present obliged—to allow themselves to be treated in a didactical manner by clergy and choirs. They resent that treatment, and assert

their right to a Musical Service more adapted to their requirements and general capacity than are those now in vogue. With the marked change in our Church (I do not say Cathedral) Services much that is familiar and even dear to us, both musically and traditionally would need to give place to the new order of music. The 'Service' music by Gibbons, Purcell, Greene, Weldon, and others; the Anthems by these same composers and others like Wise, Boyce, Travers, Nares, Attwood, etc., would be restored to its legitimate place —the Cathedral as being Cathedral Music, but not necessarily Church Music, while a new style of composition as simple as the Chorale which could become the property of the people would need to be provided for the parish and district church. In this manner, while the musical portion of our Church Service could be much improved and made more consonant with the tastes and requirements of modern congregations the Cathedral Service might remain intact, and add other generations to those through which it has already passed. For there are probably few people who would care to see the Cathedral Service violated. It is an institution—a conservative one, perhaps—distinct in itself, and which

we admire as much upon national and political grounds as for its religious significance, and no movement having for its object the improvement of the music in our churches should or would be called upon to deprive our Cathedral Service of its individuality. There is no need to stamp out the Cathedral Service because the time has come when the congregations of our churches are demanding a Service more in accord with their needs. There is room for them both; but they vary considerably in their relations to the people. The people, it may be said, go to the cathedrals but the churches would seem to come to the people—to spring up in every district where a population settles itself. Their Services ought, therefore, to meet the wants of those who attend them, and this is just what the majority of them do not. On the contrary they shape themselves into very bad copies of the Cathedral Services using music and anthems composed without any reference whatever to their introduction into the Church, for which such music is in many respects unsuited: and what is worse, they assume the shape of *performances* which should not be the prevailing character of our Church Service. In the case of the Cathedral Service this condition of things is

to be expected, for there is at this a properly constituted musical staff that may be relied upon for a creditable and a right performance of what is undertaken; but above and beyond all this there is the fact that the majority of people regard the Cathedral Service in a different light to the Church Service. They look upon the former as less a means to an end than the latter, and they know that in attending York, Durham, or Winchester, they can do little more than *think* the Service that is being rendered for them—that their service of Praise and Thanksgiving must be a passive and not an active one. On artistic, if not religious grounds we could all desire that the Cathedral Service might remain as long as the Constitution itself, and that the many fine anthems, the innumerable settings of the Communion service, and Canticles replete with all the forms and devices of sacred musical art which have emanated from the pens of those true musicians who have from age to age filled the posts of organists of our cathedrals may continue for generations to be heard within the walls of those buildings for the services of which alone they were originally and specially composed. With regard to our Church Service, a different spirit prevails. It

is the general belief that it is, as it were, the property of the people, and as such should be moulded to suit the popular taste and want. Unlike the Cathedral Service, that of the Church cannot be handed down for many generations from sire to son. It must go through some periodical process of re-modelling and re-organisation, and the time would seem to have now fully come when the first—these three hundred years—of these recapitulatory glances would need to be taken. The present and rising generation feel equal to some larger and more satisfying share in the Service, and they seem determined that whatever revision is made must be upon no other basis than that of the music of that Service being for the congregation and not for the choir. The question to be settled is—Shall the congregation sing? and that ought to be answered with some liberal concessions to the congregation such as I have endeavoured to point out: namely, a Hymnal, the use of which shall be general: the adoption of Unison singing, and a new and a more simple style of Church Music. The climax to the question—Do our Church Services meet the wants of the congregations? is before us, and those who are concerned in the matter cannot do better than face the

difficulty boldly, despite the misgivings of the timid few who would hesitate to handle so delicate a subject.

When the inquiry comes to be made—and it ought soon to come—many points will no doubt arise which it is impossible to bring within the scope of a single chapter on so large a subject as 'Our Church Music.'

CHAPTER IV.

STREET MUSIC.

The several Kinds of Street Music—Organ—Pianoforte—German Bands—Miscellaneous—The *Raison d'Etre* of 'Street Music'—Its Magnitude—Street Music a Nuisance—Its Relation to the Poor—Mr. Haweis on the Organ-Grinder—Bands in the Squares and Parks—The Nuisance at a Climax—Mr. Bass, M.P., a Deliverer—'Street Music' in Parliament—The Street Music 'Act'—Programme of a Day's Performance—A Suggestion—Rossini Instructing an Organ-Grinder.

I SHOULD not be surprised if by this time my readers suspect me of pessimist views upon the subject of the music of my country. I, however, beg no such distinction, entertaining as I do the most sanguine expectations for the musical future of England. But there is a dark side to the picture which it is the fashion to draw of our musical standing and progress, and it is to this view that I am, in this volume, specially directing the reader's attention—not with any desire to magnify our failings at the

cost of our better qualities, but rather in the hope that the airing thus given to a matter which has for long remained quiescent will lead ultimately to the eradication of some of those evils which amalgamated constitute a somewhat serious impediment to our Art. Thus in the previous chapter I have felt compelled to acknowledge the unsatisfactoriness—the inadequacy of our Church Musical system, and I am afraid that the subject of this present chapter is one which is calculated to encourage the expression of even some stronger terms of disapproval, for no one who is obliged to live in London the greater part of the year, and who not being deaf, has occupation of a kind that demands freedom from noise, could I take it arrive at any other conclusion than one of disgust and aversion for those noises which take possession of our streets, and which some folks are pleased in all earnest to style *music.*

This 'Street Music' is a phase which could not well be overlooked in any consideration of our Art as it is met with in England; besides which there are other reasons favouring its treatment. Thus it cannot be said to be a phase of which little is known; on the contrary, most people have found it to be a

matter which thrusts itself upon their consideration whether they will it or not; most individuals could say something about Street Music, and most people could relate their experiences of it—another Mr. Babbage might go so far as to recount his bitter experience of it!

A great and varied *menu* is this miscalled *Music*, containing as it does street-organs—some with their mother-of-pearl keys which move up and down, others with rows of wooden pipes and revolving dioramic effects, organs with monkeys, others with baby accompaniments, some with orchestral appliances the music from which was surely not surpassed by Nebuchadnezzar's famous band: some which confine themselves to the exposition of sacred music such as the Hallelujah Chorus, the Old Hundredth, the Adeste Fideles, and Luther's Hymn: others drawn by donkeys: then there are hurdy-gurdies and guinea pigs, while the most important of all are the magnified pianofortes the introduction of which into this country certainly is a 'blessing to men.' Of their superiority over the older species of street-organ there can be no doubt, and the proof of this is best seen in the manner in which it has driven its predecessor from the field. It will

take some time, however, to entirely eradicate the old species of street-organ, since the conservative *madri* who infest Regent Street and other important thoroughfares are clearly of opinion that the street-pianoforte does not 'fetch' the elder folks so well as it does the tribe of young patrons who can 'trip' to the same in a variety of ways which are truly astonishing.

But the street-organ (great a fact as it is) is not all that we may boast of in the shape of Street Music. We have 'the band'—bands of every conceivable description: German bands—some in uniform, others partly so, and some not: bands without 'the string' and some with it: really good 'brass' bands, which play first-class music (and which may be recognised by the style in which they render their pieces, to say nothing of their stock-in-trade of music-desks, with their paraphernalia of strings and weights) and really bad bands: such as the 'Vaterland,' quintet, quartet, or trio, when we hear it at its worst—say in the early morning, before the lungs of either the instruments or their performers are well open. We can boast, too, of the street string-band, consisting of any scratch number of violins, tenors, cellos, double-basses, guitars,

harps, and indeed, banjos—in fact, anything which can come under the title of a stringed-instrument.

But both organs and bands give way before that *olla podrida* of Musical Art—the Miscellaneous Section. Here we are met by the 'tom-tom' man, the female cornet-player, the man with the whistles and coffee-pot; another who plays 'Home, Sweet Home' with the aid of eight or nine tumblers and a puddle or so of water; his rival with the glass tubes; the seemingly blind fiddler with his frilled dog; the individual with the bells; the street topical songsters; the Scotch 'crawlers;' the nigger *troupes* of all sorts and sizes; the harmoniumist in the truck; the street zitharist; the genius with the ophicleide and spectacles; the cellar-flap artists; the old soldiers and sailors; the harp and piccolo duet; the tin-whistle band and kettle-drum accompaniment; the powerful navvies and labourers with stentorian lungs; the concertina band; the hero of the box of wires, who, in imitation of an olden custom, produces not disagreeable tones with the aid of a plectrum; 'the bean-feast' cornet-player; the omnibus horn-blowers; the bundles of rags, with their inflated goat-skins, shrill pipes, and wild cries—a certain

version of the Styrian mountaineers; the street bones; the whistling man; the female orchestra, the members of which play their brass instruments with a precision and ease which are truly remarkable; the pianoforte on wheels; the genius who plays with a stick on pieces of metal; the blind singers; the street harpist, who, Mr. Haweis tells us, has so mastered his instrument that 'a cat might walk over the wires with quite as much, probably a very similar, effect;' the tribe of pestilential errand-boys with their pipes, fifes, tin whistles, 'clappers,' jew's-harps, concertinas, bugles, tambourines, pan-pipes, triangles—in short, an almost endless variety of such things which these fellows carry about them, and with which they while away their masters' time when on their errands by day, and their own as they journey to their several homes by night. All this combination and a great deal more, which one's memory misses, constitutes the Miscellaneous side of London Street Music.

It cannot but be admitted that we have here a certain phase of English Musical Art, the dimensions and varied character of which are of no ordinary degree; and in respect to which it might well be said that it would be impossible to equal it, either for its quantity

or its quality, in any other city of the world.

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This Street Music has given thoughtful minds some concern ; and such is not to be wondered at, remembering the many questions and issues to which it gives rise.

Let us consider its social and musical importance. Many an intelligent foreigner has no doubt concluded that it represents the national taste: such an one may, indeed, have gone home, written a book, and have represented English Musical Art as an organ-grinder grinding the 'Slap Bang' Galop, 'Grandfather's Clock,' or some other equally outrageous production. But our assumed author would be misleading his countrymen, inasmuch as the street-organ no more represents the national taste of England—not even the popular taste—in matters musical than a barber's pole is indicative of the arms of the British nation.

Our Street Music is the outcome of that indiscriminate generosity which characterises us as a nation, whether we look at ourselves musically or politically. We do not hesitate to bestow heaps of money upon deserving and undeserving objects abroad, and we as readily

contribute annually a sum of money towards the encouragement of Street Music as would materially influence the National Debt were it applied to the reduction of that formidable deficit. But we are not so prosaic. Days, weeks, months, and years roll on: we meet in our streets Jews and Turks, Hindoos and Laplanders, Germans, Poles, Italians, and motley groups and specimens of our own nationality, playing, grinding, blowing, beating, scraping, thumping, plucking, and rubbing all sorts of instruments of real torture, and we pay them for it; so well, indeed, have we rewarded them for their pains that London soil is now, and has long been regarded all over the Continent as 'paved with gold' for all those itinerant artists whose constitutions and instruments can face our climate. Thus have we inherited that British Institution—our Street Music.

It is hard to throw off a bad name. Many proverbs tell us so: and were we to make an effort to rid ourselves either of the reputation we enjoy in respect to our Street Music, or the article itself, we should be facing a formidable task. The subject has already been well talked of, written of, and has received the attention of Parliament; but it

is with us still. The great cry has been to lessen and purify the element, and all measures have been tried to bring about this desirable result save the right one. You may fill the columns of newspapers with written complaints about organ-grinders, bandsmen, musical Chinese, and 'tom-tom' men. You may stand at your door and argue with greasy 'Southerners,' show them pistols, call policemen, point to your bedroom windows, draw their attention to the fact that straw lies in front of your house, threaten them with proceedings before a magistrate, you may even be in constant attendance at one of the Metropolitan Police Courts prosecuting the 'craft,' and you may, like Mr. Babbage, worry yourself to death in endeavouring to conquer the evil—and you will have accomplished nothing. It will still be with us, and likely to remain until we are all of one mind upon one point; namely, that Street Music *is* a nuisance, and that the only way to get rid thereof is to make it an indictable offence for any person, or persons, to aid and encourage any sort of street musician either with gifts of money, clothes, food, drink, spoons, or even forks.

Of the advantages of such a law let us say

nothing more at present than that it would probably soon prove an effectual check upon the growth of Street Music, and would, besides, remove a channel into which many a piece of plate and other small articles have drifted with some understanding and ulterior object between giver and receiver beyond that of maintaining the good humour of Tommy and Johnny at the nursery window. It is a pity to speak harshly of any class of people; but your writer would respectfully suggest to the police authorities and to householders in general that not unfrequently an organ-grinder is a little more than an easy-going son of the South, with a slouched hat and an olive-coloured complexion.

Before having recourse, however, to so extreme a course as that suggested, we might well look at both sides of the Street-music question. 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good,' and while we must admit that Street Music is a real nuisance, yet there is that view to take of it by which so large a section of humanity look at the matter, and which should not be disregarded by the objectors to Street Music until they have substituted some better phase of Musical Art for the enjoyment and participation of 'the million' to whom it

constitutes an only musical dish. The Monday Popular Concerts, the Promenade Concerts, cheap Opera nights, and low prices at Oratorio Performances and Recitals have done much to popularise music, and to put most people on the same basis in the matter of hearing music; but there is a class of people with whom the sum of one shilling is an amount that is not to be lightly regarded. In many courts, and alleys, and back 'slums' in London, the price of a seat on the orchestra at St. James's Hall, or in the uppermost tier of the Albert Hall, becomes by some marvellous management the agent in the production of a dinner for a six or seven-mouthed family; while the cost of a seat in the upper gallery of Covent Garden Theatre on an opera night will house and shelter such a family for at least seven days.

It is hardly surprising, then, in the face of so prosaic a state of things that in a city large as this modern Babylon is, there exists a section of 'poor humanity' to whom the æsthetical gives way to something less aspiring. The pinches of hunger, responsibility, and the like fail on certain folks; but by a happy disposition of things, certain outlets present themselves by which a good deal

of the morbidness, the despondency, the care and turmoil of such lives finds vent. Here Street Music steps in. Common as it may be to the educated ear: annoying as it unquestionably proves itself to be to scientific men who think, read, and write: bad as it is for the reputation of Musical England: unhealthy as its influence is upon the popular taste, it nevertheless performs the not unimportant function of lighting up many dark places. As Mr. Haweis, in his enjoyable book, 'Music and Morals,' truly observes of the organ-grinder, than whom we cannot call to mind a more fitting representative of Street Music: 'His sphere is large; he conquers more worlds than one; his popularity is not only wide, but varied. He enters many clean and spacious squares, and little chubby faces, well-born and rosy, look out from high-railed nursery-windows, and as they look out he looks up, and baby is danced at the bars and stops crying directly, and Tommy forgets his quarrel with Johnny, and runs to the window too, and tears are wiped and harmony is restored in many and many a nursery, and nurse herself finds the penny and smiles, and "organ-man" pockets the money and smiles, and plays five more tunes in for the money,

and lifts his hat, and waves "ta-ta!" in Italian, and walks off to "fresh fields and pastures new." . . . And where does he wander to now? . . . I meet him in the dingy alleys of the great city; I meet him in the regions of garbage and filth, where the atmosphere inhaled seems to be an impartial mixture of smoke and decomposition, and where the diet of the people seems to consist of fried herrings and potato-parings: there is our organ-man—and there, at least, we may bless him—grinding away to the miserable, sunken, and degraded denizens of Pigmire Lane or Fish Alley. Let him stay always there—let him grind ever thus. I confess it does my heart good to see those slatternly women come to their doors and stand and listen, and the heavy, frowning, coal-besmeared men lean out of the windows with their pipes, and forgetting hunger and grinding poverty, hushing also the loud oath and blasphemy for a little season, smile with the pleasure of the sweet sounds. Through that little black window with the cracked panes, you can see the lame shoemaker look up for a moment, and, as he resumes the long-drawn-out stitches with both hands, it is with countenance relaxed, and almost pleasurable

energy. The pale-faced tailor looks out from the top story (yes, like a beam of sunshine the music has struck through him!), he forgets the rent, and the work, and the wages, and the wretchedness of life. It is the end of the day, it is lawful to rest for a moment and listen, and they do listen—the men and women clustering in groups on their door-steps, and leaning from the windows above, and the children—oh, the children! I look down the alley, and suddenly it is flooded with the light of the low sun; it smites the murky atmosphere into purple shades, and broad, warm, yellow light upon the pathway, and glitters like gold leaf upon the window-panes; and the children—the children are dancing all down the alley, dancing in long vistas far down into the sunny mist, two and two, three and three, but all dancing, and dancing in time; and their faces—many poor pale faces, and some rosy ones too—their faces are so happy, and the whole alley is hushed save only for the music and the dancing of the children. I bless that organ-man—a very Orpheus in hell! I bless his music! I stand in that foul street where the blessed sun shines, and where the music is playing, I give the man a penny to prolong the happiness of

those poor people, of those hungry, pale, and ragged children.'

What a picture—and how true a one! Shall we tear away the music from these poor souls: shall the harmony and melody be no more heard in the dirty courts and the dingy alleys: are such poor to be debarred so cheap a pleasure, and is life in Pigmire Alley to be rendered yet more intolerable? The answer to these questions must we think be—Yes. Don't give organ-grinders money for 'grinding' down courts and alleys: take such musical attractions out of Mud Lane: let the children cease dancing and tripping to so poor a pipe: give them better music and more of it: take the tailor, and the shoemaker, the charwoman, the sempstress, the navvies, and labourers out of their stifling single rooms, and do something to make them more like fellow-creatures.

Many will ask—How is all this to be done? Well, much might be achieved by turning to some useful account the many open spaces in London. There are the Parks and the many squares, nearly all of which are surrounded by a population of the very poorest description. There is Soho Square, the gates of which are studiously kept locked, although there is scarcely a private resident in the Square, most of the

houses being places of business. Yet around that green spot, in the districts of 'The Dials,' Soho, and St. James's, there are thousands of children, to say nothing of grown-up people, whose lungs are wasting for the want of some wider space in which to breathe, than the narrow streets, courts, and alleys, and 'slums' afford them. Berkeley, Grosvenor, Portman, Euston, Gordon, and Golden Squares, are all hemmed in with a mass of poor humanity, huddled together at the back of the large houses, to whom a seat and a walk in the nearest square in the cool of the evening would be a positive boon. That the poor can be trusted in such places has been proved by the experiment of throwing open the Temple and Gray's Inn Gardens in the summer evenings. Who would have imagined that there existed around Temple Bar (when it was) so many children as can be seen pushing their way through the gates of these gardens? Again, the extent to which young and old avail themselves of the Leicester Square Garden, and the boon that it has proved to the poor and thickly populated district in which it is situated, should encourage those in power to throw open for some hours in the evening all the green spots such as the squares in and around London.

But—the Music. No difficulty would, we apprehend, be encountered here. It would not be necessary to call in that heterogeneous collection of talent to which reference has already been made to minister to the musical wants of 'poor London,' indeed steps would, probably, have to be taken to prevent its infesting the green spots made public; but a call might most consistently be made upon the fine military and police bands to give performances at stated times and places. There are several of such army bands always stationed in London: the music they play is the best of all sorts; it is rendered in a style that is well-nigh perfect; though we pay for the support of such bands, we nevertheless scarcely ever hear them; they, or most of them, we imagine, never get an audience other than the 'fry' who follow them when on the march, or on parade: how much more useful, then, might they prove themselves to be could some arrangements be come to by which such military bands could administer to the musical wants of the poor and others in and around this great Metropolis.

And when the strength of the military bands is exhausted, when there still remain green spots with no music therein, there will even then be the 'British Volunteers.' The various

corps of this admirable home army also possess a body of bandsmen which, in nearly every instance, consists of well-trained performers. We doubt not that many of such bands would be willing enough to go through their rehearsals in open air near their headquarters: that if appealed to they would take up their *locale* in one of the parks or squares, and perform a programme of instrumental music to as many as care to listen to it; or perhaps by the aid of some plan of subscription the services of the several bands might be secured nightly in various districts upon an organised plan, which would place the best class of music, and the opportunities of hearing the same, within the means of the poorest of the poor.*

When it is remembered, as a fact, that such volunteer bandsmen are willing to give up a whole Saturday afternoon for the purpose of marching out with their corps and playing a few pieces which can be marched to, it is not unlikely that they would be ready enough to consider any proposal by which their services might consistently be turned to better account in the manner indicated; and we believe that if the matter were taken up by those whose moral

* Until lately the band of the Corps of Commissionaires acted upon this most admirable plan.

duty it is to provide reasonable enjoyment for their less-favoured fellow-creatures, they would be doing a great work to supplement that bounty which they now exhibit in the building of churches, subscribing to charities, raising of asylums, and the foundation of Temperance-houses and Coffee-palaces.

The advantages of such an improved Street Music would be many. If the poorer of the poor classes could be brought more into the open air: if they could be made to leave their courts, alleys, yards, and rooms in the evenings when their work is done, in favour of some adjoining square, or garden, or park: if they were less prisoners and availed themselves more fully of that freedom which belongs to them, then they would become socially improved. They would be better men and women morally and physically. There would be fewer Mud Lanes and Pigmire Alleys: the workhouses would be less full, and, perchance, the prisons too.

And all this we are bold to think the bands, and the open squares and gardens would go far towards accomplishing.

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It was in the year 1863 that the Street Music Nuisance worked itself up to a point.

In the eyes and ears of many men and women whose views on the matter deserved to be recognised, the grievance had grown unbearable, and many wise persons put their heads together to consider how best to remedy the evil. Such a step was inevitable, for scientific men were being driven to distraction. Mr. John Leech, of *Punch* celebrity, after moving to various quarters of London and the suburbs in search of freedom from the visitation of bands and organ-grinders, fled to Hamburg, suffering that expatriation and losing some £50 a week for a temporary immunity from the annoyance: business men were finding the 'thrice-cursed droning noise—that abomination of London which makes one ill,' intolerable: musicians proper were positively tortured by it: clergymen were prevented from preparing their sermons: the hour of prayer in Lady ——'s family was constantly being shifted in order to avoid the strains 'at one and the same time, with equal loudness, of "Annie Laurie," "The Last Rose of Summer," and the Prison Song from the *Trovatore:*' medical men demanded protection from the nuisance in the names of themselves, their families, and the sick and weary in general: Royal Academicians could not paint for the noise and

the tyranny of the 'Savoyard fiends:' nor could Mr. Babbage continue his calculations.

At length a deliverer arose. Mr. Michael T. Bass took up the cause of those that were oppressed. The defective state of the existing Police Law in regard to Street Music in London had made itself apparent to all right-thinking minds: Mr. Bass undertook to remedy the law, and early in the Session of 1864 he gave notice of his intention to move for leave to introduce a Bill for the better Regulation of Street Music in the Metropolitan Police District. This intimation caused great commotion. Mr. Bass was overwhelmed with letters of congratulation, thanks, offers of assistance, testimony, facts, data, reports, etc., numerous enough to make a veritable Blue Book: and although he anticipated no small amount of opposition to his motion—in which he was not disappointed, inasmuch as there were several members of Parliament, certain lords and other distinguished persons who it was known fostered and positively enjoyed the performances of organ-grinders and negro-melodists—he persevered in his cause, and had the satisfaction of finding the Bill read a second time in the House of Commons amid considerable cheering and a large majority.

Thanks to Mr. Bass, then, we have a Law for the Regulation of Street Music, and the text of that law is appended for the edification of those who may not already be versed in it. It is as follows :

ANNO VICESIMO SEPTIMO AND VICESIMO OCTAVO VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

Cap. LV.

An Act for the better Regulation of Street Music within the Metropolitan Police District.

25th July, 1864.

Whereas, by Section Fifty-seven of the Act passed in the Session of Parliament held in the Second and Third years of the Reign of Her present Majesty, intituled *An Act for further improving the Police in and near the Metropolis*, it was enacted, that any Householder within the Metropolitan Police District might require any Street Musician to depart from the Neighbourhood of the House of any such Householder, on account of the Illness of any Inmate of such House, or for other reasonable Cause : And whereas the said Provision has been found insufficient for the Protection of such Householders from Annoyance by Street Musicians : Be it therefore enacted by

the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, as follows:

I. Section Fifty-seven of the said Act is hereby repealed, and in lieu thereof the following Provision shall take effect as Part of the said Act; namely, any Householder within the Metropolitan Police District, personally, or by his Servant, or by any Police Constable, may require any Street Musician or Street Singer to depart from the Neighbourhood of the House of such Householder, on account of the Illness, or on account of the Interruption of the ordinary Occupations or Pursuits of any Inmate of such House, or for other reasonable or sufficient Cause; and every Person who shall sound or play upon any Musical Instrument, or shall sing in any Thoroughfare or public Place near any such House after being so required to depart, shall be liable to a Penalty not more than Forty Shillings, or, in the Discretion of the Magistrate, before whom he shall be convicted, may be imprisoned for any Time not more than Three Days, and it shall be lawful for any Constable belonging to the Metropolitan Police

Force to take into Custody without Warrant any Person who shall offend as aforesaid: Provided always he shall be given into Custody by the Person making the Charge: Provided also, that the Person making a Charge for an Offence against this Act shall accompany the Constable who shall take into Custody any Person offending as aforesaid to the nearest Police Station House, and there sign the Charge Sheet kept for such Purpose.

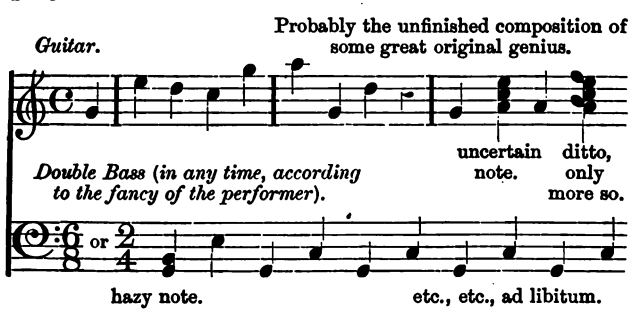
II. Whenever any Person charged with an Offence under this Act shall be brought to any Station House, during the Time when the Police Court shall be shut, it shall be lawful for the Constable in charge of the Station House to require the Person making the charge to enter into a Recognizance, conditioned as is provided by the Act passed in the Second and Third Years of Her Majesty, Chapter Forty-seven, Section Seventy-two; and upon the Refusal of such Person to do so it shall be lawful for such Constable to discharge from Custody the Person so charged.

That such Parliamentary protection was sorely needed is beyond doubt, and in support of this statement it is only necessary to refer the reader to our friend *Punch* for a sample of the entertainment provided at that time for

residents of the most quiet streets and squares of the Metropolis.

PROGRAMME FOR QUIET STREET MUSICAL PERFORMANCE DURING THE LONDON SEASON.

Time of Day, 9 A.M. German boy and girl, solo and duet, accompanying themselves on double bass and guitar. Introduction—Tuning for ten minutes; during this time the educated amateur will have much pleasure in noticing the laudable efforts made by the double bass to get into the same clef with the guitar. Despairing of ultimate success, and unwilling to keep their audience waiting any longer, they play as follows:



This performance will last until 9.45, after which—10 A.M., Full German Band, with music stands and a conductor:

Overture . . *Guglielmo Tell.*

This last piece, though very fairly executed, at all events by comparison with other itinerant performances, frightens several horses. This concludes at 10.30.

From 10 A.M. until 1 P.M. will be heard, at intervals, clearly or faintly, according to the thickness of the walls, the two young ladies in the next house, practising scales, Schubert's variations, operatic music arranged as waltzes, galops, etc.

11 A.M. Man with organ:

Air . . *La mia Letitzia,*

played very slowly, with whistling accompaniment, out of time.

12 A.M. Man, without organ, but with monkey:

Air, performed by monkey on cymbals, *Vague.*

Firing gun by monkey, shouting by man, and other performances, including a broad-sword combat between man and monkey.

12.45 P.M. Combination of talent. Man with organ *and* monkey. Tradesmen's boys cat-calling and whistling reminiscences of popular airs.

1.15 P.M. During luncheon, organ with monkey. Seated cripple, charitably supposed

to be deaf, turning the handle, and old woman, who collects money and shakes tambourine. This organ is equal to three entire brass orchestras of fifty performers, drums, cymbals, and triangles included.

2 P.M. The Infant German Band, composed of small dirty boys, evidently learning their notes.

Overture (supposed to be) *Guglielmo Tell.*

2.30 P.M. Indian musician with his tum-tum-tum.

3 P.M. Niggers, accompanied by admiring crowd.

3.30 P.M. Solo (Flageolet), *Home, Sweet Home* (New Version).

Street boy whistling reminiscences as before.

4 P.M. More niggers, in costume, with kettle-drums; a man with a false nose, and a female singer:

Balcony Stalls (area railings) .	1½d.
Pit (pavement) . . .	½d.
Dress Circle (door-step) . .	2d.
Private Boxes (upper windows) well filled with servants . .	*ad lib.*

5 P.M. Dancing pony. Whip smacking,

'Hi! Hi!' 'Hoop!' Volunteer band in distance, marching out to drill.

5.30 P.M. Itinerant vocalists, distressed weavers, with singing children.

Solo and Chorus: 'I'm Leaving Thee in Sorrow, Annie.'

6 P.M. Solo, violin.

7 P.M. Grand Finale. Organ corner of street. Niggers, new set, with two extra voices, and a leader, who squeaks shrilly. Oratorio kind of organ opposite corner of street. Volunteer band in the distance, marching home after drill.

The entire concert concludes punctually at 7.40.

8 P.M. A POLICEMAN is seen passing slowly before the dining-room window: and all is still.

10 P.M. Somebody going home, playing accordion.

10.30 P.M. Somebody else, whistling.

11 P.M. Cats.

Such are the delights of the Great London Unmusical Season!

With the aid of the existing law, some further legislation, and an improved popular taste Street Music might eventually be driven

out. In the meantime, while flesh in large cities is heir to the nuisance, we might take a leaf out of Rossini's book, and like him do our best towards making, say—organ-grinding less unpleasant. Ill-used and misinterpreted composers—Mr. Arthur Sullivan, and the composer of 'Nancy Lee' for instance—could follow the original mode of proceeding once adopted by the composer of 'Guillaume Tell.'

'When Rossini lived in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, he found one day in front of his house a poor old fellow who was grinding out *Di tanti palpiti* on a barrel-organ. The passers-by stopped. All at once a voice from their midst cried, "Quicker, quicker!" "How so, sir?" "Turn your handle quicker; it is *allegro*." "But, sir, I don't know——" "Do it so—so," and Rossini, recognised by no one, steps up to the organ, and grinds away at the pace he wished. "Thank you, sir; I'll remember the lesson." Next day the organ stops again and plays *Di tanti palpiti*, this time in the manner taught the day before. "Bravo!" cries a voice from the opposite house. "Bravo, bravo, bravo!" and a louis-d'or falls at the feet of the itinerant artist. It was Rossini again. Of course the organ-

grinder was delighted, and for his own comfort Rossini was, beyond doubt, unwise.'

If everyone who is tormented with this 'phase' of Music in England could but sum up courage to follow the first part of Rossini's plan, and insist on giving the 'grinders' and their *fratelli* a lesson—the inconvenience arising from the perpetual instruction might be sufficient to induce such offenders to leave the neighbourhood; but—the louis d'or would be a fatal mistake! This leads me to the commercial side of our subject, on which I could say much, but this chapter is already sufficiently long. With the reader's permission, therefore, I will close it, and devote the next to some remarks on 'Musical Commercialisms.'

CHAPTER V.

MUSICAL COMMERCIALISMS.

Pricing of Songs and Sheet Music—The 'Shilling a Sheet' Rate—'All Music at Half-Price'—Signed Copy Process—'Royalty' System—Inaccurate Music—Music Editing—An As-Sung Edition of Oratorios wanted—Misreadings of the Masters—Suggestions for Improvement—A Musical Guide—Another Commercialism—Advertising Sharks—Fish that are Caught—The Course adopted—A Mock *Début*—Baits held out—What to Avoid.

THERE is an order of things which would seem to refuse the existence of anything that is good without some counteracting influence —some alloy—to prejudice and depreciate its value. Music as an Art is so affected, at least, in this country. It is not all plain sailing for Music in England. Though its progress in the hearts and ears of the people during the last thirty years, from the time of the 'Great' Exhibition, has been very marked and eminently satisfactory to all who have the

cause of Music at heart and who foster the conviction that it is the mightiest among the Arts and that one to which we must look for the largest refining and enlightening influence, the fact remains that that desirable end has not been gained without some opposition, nor must we forget that there yet remains much which impedes the march of Music in this country, and, to a very perceptible degree, checks the Art in its civilising and health-giving mission. The fact is, Music in England labours under many disadvantages arising not out of our being a radically unmusical nation —a people who fail to see what

> 'Difference there *can* be
> 'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee:'

or a race who refuse to give ear to the charms of Orpheus, and, we may add, to pay for that precious luxury, but which unfavouring influences may rather be traced to the doings of that class of individual who live *by* Music and not *for* it, and who are assisted by that other class who, being outside the pale of practising musicians, yet succeed in deriving a not insignificant income out of the Art in ways which are as ingenious as they are varied. This fact reminds one of the old proverb—the Art of

Music being the carcase—the eagles those parasites who fawn on the Art for a subsistence, and for which end they are ready to sap it of its very life-blood and to drag it ever so deep through the dirtiest of mud. Such sycophants infest all walks of the Art, and they do not scruple to throw out worthless baits perchance to bring wealth to their pockets—a system interesting as it may be to those who can practise it, is nevertheless one that is fraught with much danger to the Art. Of some of the means which conduce to this result, reference has been made in other parts of this book. Under our present heading, 'Musical Commercialisms,' the endeavour will be to lay bare a few grievances which, if not as iniquitous and fraudulent as, for instance, the doings of the person who advertises to teach so difficult an Art as Singing, 'including the shake,' in twelve easy lessons, and who further offers to impart this stock of knowledge not by personal interviews but through the medium of the post, yet are evils which constitute real obstacles to the progress of the Art. Many of these 'complaints,' or 'maladies,' as they might be termed, could well be done without, and the Art with all concerned would be the better for the change. The vast

machinery of musical life in England is clogged with many defects: when these are gradually swept away there will be more work accomplished, and that work will be better in quality. The Art has long served as a flesh-pot for those small fry who have failed in every other calling, but thanks to a better musical education, and consequently a more discriminating public, the many lesser evils which have for years been so sore a plague to the Art are not only disappearing, but the outside public, who used to be the chief sufferers therefrom, are beginning to detect, and consequently to avoid the baits and traps of the charlatan and musical 'cheap-jack.'

But some greater evils are still amongst us: and these are the more to be considered inasmuch as any individual effort to remove them would be useless. Nothing but the combined voice of the public Press, and the united action of all who desire to see the Art of Music enjoying the attention of every household in this country, will suffice to remove several really serious obstacles to our musical progress. The highest and lowest musical workers are concerned here, and the point to be decided by them is—shall

England be a musical country, or a nation of unscrupulous traders in Music ?

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One of the forms in which we find the Art seriously hampered presents itself to us in the music publishing interest—in the pricing of Songs and of Sheet-music generally: and this phase is one of the most objectionable of all and has the least to recommend it. It is a grievance of long standing, and a system which, if in itself not criminal is at least one which courts dishonest acts and makes dishonesty very easy for those who are not above practising cheating. It may be urged by publishers that a musical author has no right to interfere with the practices and custom of the trade; but, on the other hand your author also belongs to a music-buying community having a grievance which he shares, and anything that can, ought to be done either to remove the wrong, or at any rate to put people on their guard against it.

The evil referred to springs from an old fashion that has hitherto survived Time. Before the days of the Repeal of the Paper Duty, before the means of reproducing copies were as ready as they now are, and at the time when there was one musical person for every hundred to

be found now Music was a luxury: those who sang, and who could sing were considerably fewer; pianofortes were the possessions of the rich only; there were fewer composers, and much less music was composed (this latter fact was probably an advantage); so that the charge of one shilling the sheet was not probably an excessive price or a figure beyond the means of those who regarded one or more of the various forms of the Art as a necessity. But with the Tax off paper, and the means of disseminating musical as well as other knowledge made easier, we might well imagine that printed music would have shared in those cheapening processes which have brought all other printed matter within reasonable bounds, and which have made it possible for the poorest people not only to read books but to buy them.

In some respects, perhaps, musical works have shared in these advantages, otherwise we could not have the cheap editions of the Oratorios and Operas. Yet Sheet-music—the so-called 'Pieces' and Songs—still retain and are marked with their excessively high prices. The reason for the continuance of this custom is not so clear, and as it is fraught with many disadvantages and has absolutely nothing to

recommend it the sooner it is a thing of the past the better will it be for the public and for the musical reputation of England.

The origin of the shilling-a-sheet rate was, no doubt, owing to the cost involved in the production some thirty or fifty years ago, and to the few who required songs and 'pieces,' the rate, we repeat, was not probably prohibitive; although that would hardly be the case now when so many thousands of poor people are at the expense of buying music.

Thus have we arrived at that institution—conveyed in the words, 'All music at half-price;' by which the excessive rate at which sheet-music has been, and is now marked is really felt in theory only and not in practice, which after all is the thing to be chiefly considered. This desirable state of things has been reached through a spirit of underselling which must have run wild among music-publishers of some twenty-five and thirty years ago. Inspired with a desire to do more business, and being aware of the respectable profits arising out of the sale of songs and 'pieces,' one tradesman could well afford to sell at one penny or so less in the shilling, and so cripple a neighbouring business. At

length the fashion grew—the underselling continued, till now the general public gets its new music at half the marked price, and refuses to be hoodwinked by any advertising houses who hold out as some do the bait, 'All music at half-price,' as being something out of the common, and a thing worth noting. If, therefore, there are folks—and especially the parents of children at boarding-schools—who pay more than one shilling and sixpence or two shillings for a song marked three shillings or four shillings respectively, they have themselves to blame, inasmuch as they are as fully entitled to purchase such at the lesser rates as though the reduced price were printed on the copy. It is to be feared, however, that a good many people, especially the well-to-do, and young ladies at school are misled on this point; but of this more anon.

Let us see the publisher's mode of procedure. He holds the MS. of both words and the music for a song; he can issue it as a so-called 'four-shilling' song, or with a little compression it may make a 'three-shilling' piece. If the music happens to be by a Hatton, Sullivan, Stephen Adams, or a Blumenthal, the publisher will find no difficulty in spreading it and giving it the 'four

shilling' aspect—that is to say, there shall be the recognised four sheets (we do not say of music) at one shilling the sheet. But, mark the plan. The first page of such sheets is occupied with the title of the song; the second is a blank; then we get the song itself, with not infrequently another blank on the last page but one, while the last and outside page is always appropriated by the publisher for the purpose of advertising other music which he may have in stock, or for announcing new and forthcoming works. Thus three, and frequently four pages out of the eight (for which the public is rated in our opinion much too highly) are of no service whatever to the purchaser, inasmuch as the title, which is the only point to be considered, is always repeated over the music on page 3. Against such a 'commercialism' the public has every right to raise its voice.

With 'three-shilling' songs the *modus operandi* is not less provoking. The understanding between publisher and public for a given number of sheets of music at the prescribed rate is no more adhered to than in the case of four-shilling songs and 'pieces,' while all kinds of devices are resorted to in order to deceive the eye of the purchaser, and to put a

good face on what is really a bad bargain. Thus one may take up any number of three-shilling 'pieces' and songs published within the last few years, and scarcely one shall give the full three sheets, *i.e.*, six pages of music, to which the public is entitled. The deviations are both numerous and varied. Thus one piece shall consist of two sheets, out of which there are two and a half pages of music, the rest of the space being devoted to the title-page and the publisher's announcements. Another piece will probably be found to consist of but one and a half sheets—a half sheet slipped in between the one—with a quantity of but two pages of music, for which the public is asked to pay a sum which will purchase an Oratorio by Handel or Haydn, or a Mass by Schubert or Mozart.

The evil does not so far as songs are concerned end here. Because the amount of money which would purchase a neatly bound copy of one of the Oratorios is not already enough for a few bars of music with words which in too many cases are both of them of poor quality, the publishers have invented another system of black-mail in the shape of 'signed' copies. Various signatures are stamped on such copies. Sometimes it is the

signature of the composer, at others that of the author of the words, and most frequently that of the vocalist who sings the song. Of course, such a process becomes a matter of monetary arrangement between publisher and composer, singer, or author; while the 'spoil' which comes for division issues from the pockets of the public, who are mulcted in the sum of twopence for every so-called 'signed' copy.

It is hard to see anything in the 'signed' copy process beyond its being the means of putting money into already rich pockets. The explanation of the publisher is that such copies may be depended upon as being accurate and perfect both as regards words and music; but surely this is only a condition of things which the public has a right to demand when it pays its two shillings or eighteenpence for an unsigned copy of a four-shilling or three-shilling song as the case may be. Either such unsigned copies are accurate or they are not. If they are perfect, and constitute the right edition, then there can be no need of copies with anyone's signature stamped thereupon. If they are not correct copies, then the publisher is manifestly doing wrong and is deserving of censure

for receiving the monies of the public for an article which may be said to be imperfect. Besides, it is not even clear that such 'signed' copies ever meet the gaze of those by whom they are supposed to be signed: the names or initials not being autograph signatures but a mere stamped impression.

So far as the public is concerned, there should be no need of 'signed' copies, inasmuch as the profit on songs is already excessive and would admit of reform in favour of the public; and who ought therefore to have no care as to the accuracy and *bonâ fides* of the article for which they pay most liberally. Perhaps we shall be nearer the truth if we say that the institution of 'signed' copies owes its origin more to the advancement of the publisher's and singer's interests than to those of the public. And here that abominable invention the 'Royalty' system steps in. To make a song known, to ensure its winning the popular ear, it is necessary to air it constantly and advantageously before the British public. It falls to the lot of the vocalist to accomplish that end: and the vocalist, being an individual with failings common to humanity does not turn from singing songs, good and bad, for

the edification of all whom it concerns, including of course that section of English musical people whose sole enjoyment consists in the delectation they gain from listening to an almost endless programme of ballads and so-called songs. It is somebody's lot to pay the singer for the labour involved in making known these sugary compositions. That 'somebody' is the publisher: who curiously enough, however, is not actually the bearer of the burden: inasmuch as by this 'signed' copy process he dexterously throws the charge on to the public—making his customers pay what may be termed his Advertising account for whatever songs and ballads he may choose to publish!

The signature business, then, becomes not (as is commonly supposed) a protective clause for the purchaser, but rather a matter of convenience and business arrangement between publisher and singer. The singer demands a royalty for whatever songs he sings: in consideration for which he authorises the publisher to print on each copy 'sung by ——:' the celebrated vocalist's signature is stamped on an edition, for which 'permission' and assistance the singer receives £50, £100, or more according to the position of the singer in the world

of song. By this means ballads are disseminated: for it is not the superior quality of the poetry or the music which leads to the success and acceptance by the public of so many trashy compositions which we are accustomed to hear. Such indifferent songs are called 'pot-boilers,' and in very many cases vocalists have to sing them because they are paid for doing so; *i.e.* he or she receives a 'royalty' on every copy sold. The singer with his charming voice and style *makes* the song: and it is, indeed, almost to be regretted that a singer has such power, for it has not invariably been exerted in a beneficial direction. Hence it has many times happened that after an enraptured audience has been fascinated by the tasteful performance of some weak ballad, the whole country has been deluged with copies of a production only to be rendered tolerable by the exquisite performer with whom it originated. The detrimental effect upon the interests of science and taste may be presumed —in such instances—to be inversely as the pecuniary benefit of the singer and the music-dealer. Regarding the matter, then, in its two-fold aspect—an insult to musical taste, and a delicate imposition on the public,

the 'signed' copy system will, we think, be regarded by all unprejudiced people as a sore evil.

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But I have not done with the publishers. There is another and that a more grave charge to be preferred against them. I mean the dissemination in wholesale quantities of musical matter which is inaccurate, misleading, opposed to all the principles of modern musical style, taste, and custom, and therefore music which is unfit in its present form for the daily and hourly consumption of those who (to continue my figure) may be said to feed on it. In these days when the minds of all who have the cause of Musical England at heart are concerned in devising the best means of musical education, and to this end are endowing training schools and colleges with scholarships and the like, it cannot but be regarded as a calamity that this great good is being correspondingly counteracted in a way which would seem to have escaped attention. I refer to the inaccurate, inartistic, and misleading character of much of the Oratorio Music which is issued from the publishing houses. Take the case of Handel's works as these are being published.

I have before me as I write a recently purchased copy of Handel's 'Messiah,' which in my opinion does but little credit to the musical editor of the house from which it emanates, while it ill accords with the efforts which are being made in this latter half of the nineteenth century to redeem this country of the reputation of being the Great Un-Musical Power of Europe. If the publishers instead of supporting the exertions which are being made, use their almost infinite means of propagating mischief in the shape of printed matter which might be considerably improved in its literary and musical accuracy, the efforts of the enthusiasts might as well be unmade. As things now are the question resembles a 'tug of war' with the odds pretty much in favour of the publishers, whose facilities for propagating their mischief are much more perfect, and consequently successful in their result than is the at present imperfect machinery which the enthusiasts are enabled to bring into play in order to sow their good seed. If the disseminators of musical works are not prepared to support the educationalists the latter may as well either cease their efforts altogether, or re-double them and direct their attention to

the wants of the publishers, inviting them to step up to South Kensington and be educated in the places of the scholars.

I am ready enough to admit that to be able to possess a copy of Handel's immortal 'Messiah' for one shilling is a great boon, but surely it is not impossible or beyond the pale of trade enterprise to issue a perfect as readily as an imperfect work for that small sum. My copy possesses several undesirable characteristics. It is not printed as sung: it is not wholly Handel's music: the text, as allotted to the music, is often nonsense: neither is it printed in the way that it should be played (I refer, of course, to the pianoforte copy).

I am aware that these defects are not all of them to be laid to the charge of the publishers, who will no doubt assure me that the recitatives are printed as Handel wrote them; that what is not Handel's music is of no importance being merely a few instances of the introduction of chords for the purpose of accommodating the vocalist; that any apparent infractions of the English language must be allowed for on the score of Handel's immense genius and his slight knowledge of our language; and lastly, that to print the music

as it should be played would necessitate an interference with the composer's work which they would not feel justified in making. But there is in these days another view of the matter. A large number of people are not of an inquiring turn of mind in respect to whatever they may see in print; and to such anything that is set down in black and white comes not only very welcome, but is greedily accepted as 'gospel truth.' They see a thing in print and they swear by it, never dreaming that there are in the world such items of humanity as ignorant compositors and careless editors. Such people buy, say the cheap editions of the Oratorios, and at once begin committing them to their ocular and aural senses with a result which cannot be other than deplorable, for they thus begin to sow the seeds of ideas which it frequently takes years, and sometimes more than a lifetime afterwards to eradicate. When the eye fastens on a musical passage and the ears hear it for the first time, then more than at any other time does that passage impress itself upon the mind: and it is because there are so many thousands of individuals—young and old—in this country who are educating themselves from what they read, and who think it the

wiser investment to buy a library of musical works for the sum of money which they would probably have to pay for say a dozen lessons in instruction, that I venture to raise my voice against a system of disseminating what (for some better term) I must call deceptive musical matter. To such painstaking students and to those who are already educated an edition of say 'The Messiah' *as sung*, would be a boon. Copies of such an edition might be scattered far and wide, and those who felt that they could be their own masters might at once begin their application with the assurance that they were thus far on the right road, and that what they were committing to memory would not have to be eradicated and almost completely thrown aside as soon as they might go to a master. Nor, with an 'as sung' copy in the hands of the youthful aspirant should we feel as uncomfortable as we now cannot fail to do whenever there is in view the unwelcome prospect of the aspiring tenor, Mr. Tomkyns, favouring the company with the 'Comfort ye,' or some other piece of recitative, which he never fails to assure us he knows! Why, in the name of good sense should the public educate itself to sing—

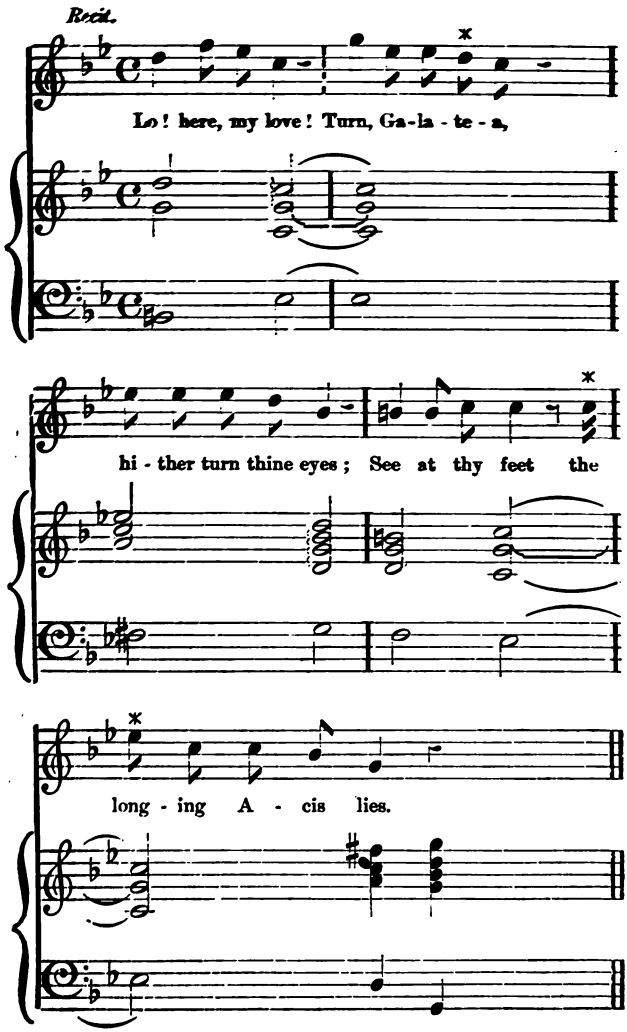
Recit.

Lo! here, my love! Turn, Ga-la-te-a,

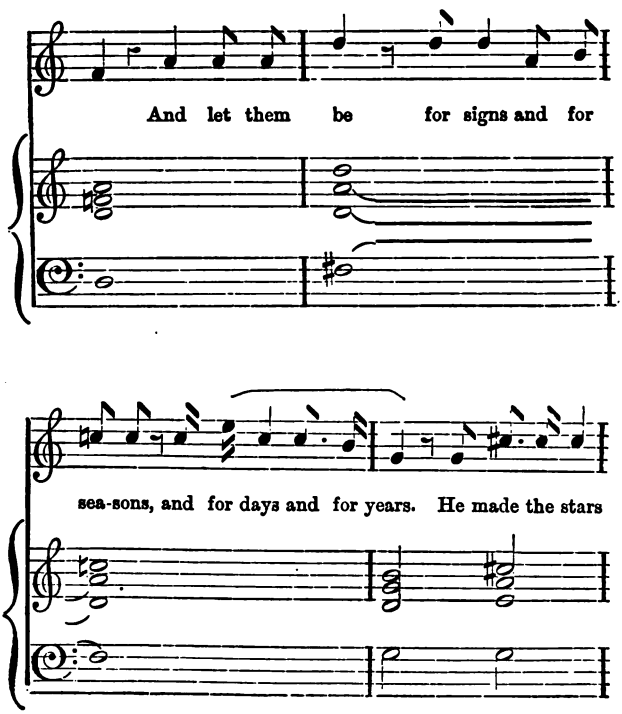
hi-ther turn thine eyes; See at thy feet the

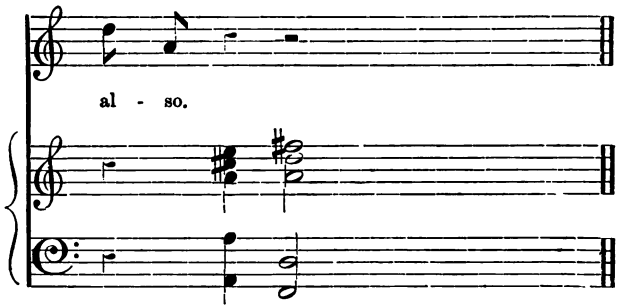
long-ing A-cis lies.

when every public singer would probably render it thus :



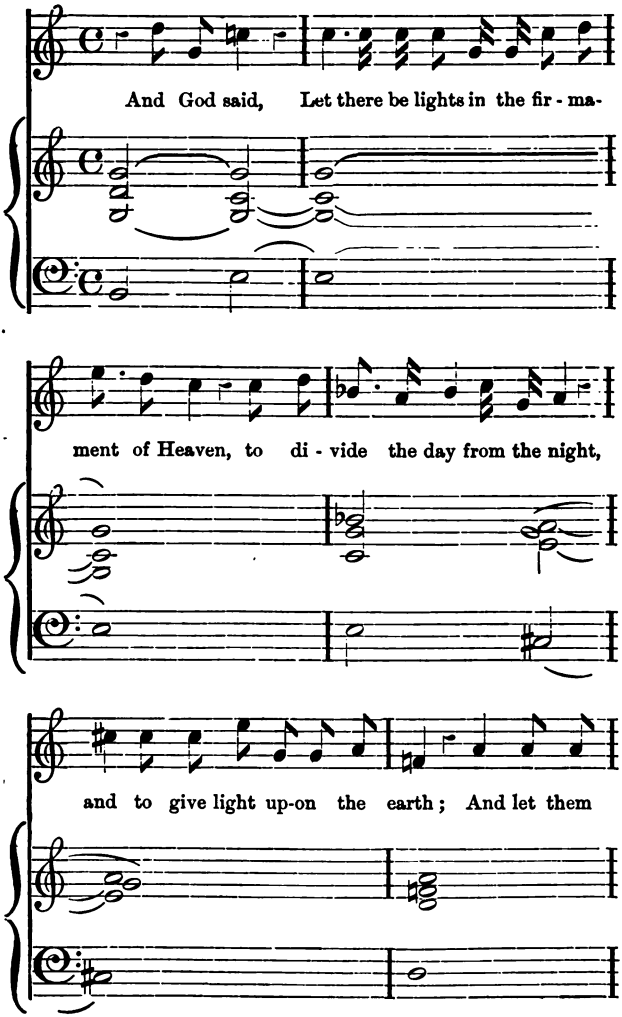
Or, why should anxious students and those people who cannot afford to pay a musical guide spend their time and their throats in committing to memory so ludicrous a passage from the recitative, 'And God said, Let there be lights,' as the following contained in my copy of Haydn's 'Creation:'





which arrangement of both words and music —due almost wholly to editors and publishers, is simply a travesty of one of the finest numbers in the entire range of oratorio music. The merest schoolboy, it would be thought could have detected the absurdity of such a musical passage, and could probably have converted the text into something like sensible language. Surely the Divine command, 'Let there be lights,' should never be followed by so ludicrous and inactive a context as 'And let them *be*,' as both the words and music of my copy of the 'Creation' indicate. Nor is the situation at all found in the curious and almost facetious statement, 'He made the stars *also*,' which is probably intended to convey the fact that 'He made the *stars* also.' Thus corrected, this particular number of the oratorio would rightly stand thus :

Recit.—"AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHTS."

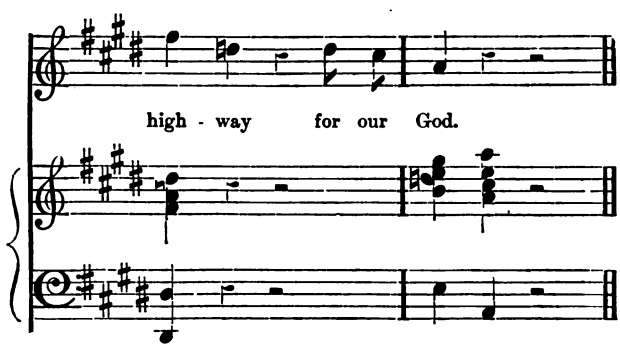


be for signs and for sea-sons, and for days and for

years. He made the stars al - so.

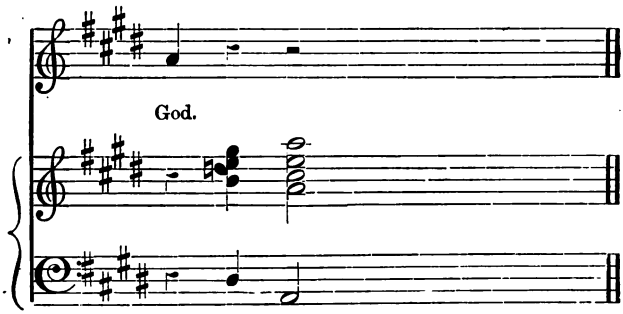
In support of the assertion that publishers issue works which it is impossible to play as they are printed—and surely no worse charge could be arrayed against a body of men (who flatter themselves that they are evangelising us to a right musical condition), involving as it does a somewhat disagreeable reflection upon their efficiency and acumen as business men, to say nothing of the undesirable feeling which I

hope has already been brought home to them of knowing that they have sensibly hindered Musical Progress and frustrated the good intentions of many a scholar seeking to teach himself—in support of my charge, I repeat, I will cite a few examples which ought to satisfy the publishers that their editors' pruning-knives have much work before them, unless indeed we are to sit ourselves down, leaving the future of the Art and Artists to take care of itself. Here is an extract:

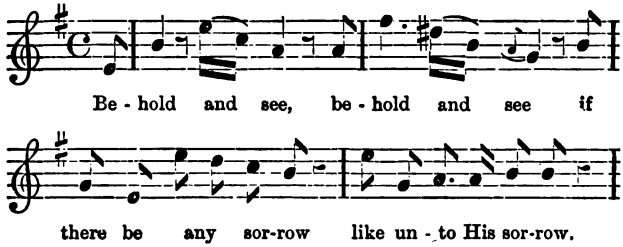


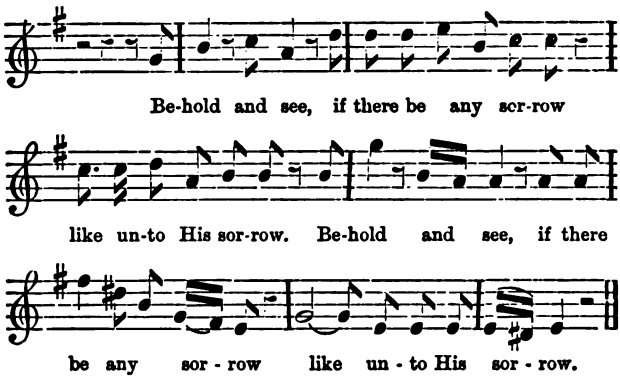
which the reader will recognise as a well-known passage from Handel's 'Messiah,' wherein the singer is invited to sing the word 'God' to the note A against the crushing chord of the dominant seventh on E, the effect of which can probably be more easily

imagined than described, and which might have been avoided and I need hardly say much improved for the singer, by giving him an unaccompanied note, throwing back the dominant chord by a crotchet-space, thus:



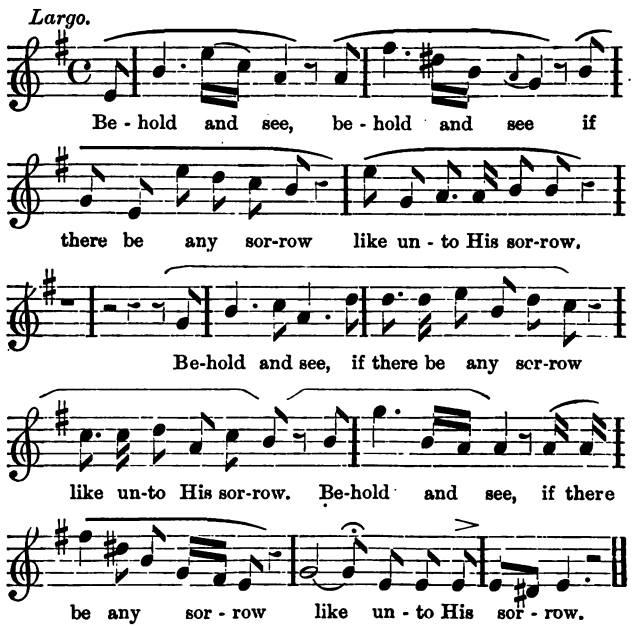
Similar absurdities abound throughout our copies of Handel's works. Passing over several minor errors which a little editorial discretion might soon set right, a more glaring instance of the kind of thing of which the writer complains is presented in the air 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow,' printed thus:





and which in such a shape is simply nonsense and quite unworthy the pains to which no doubt some thousands of people have put themselves in committing it to memory. There is no sense conveyed in the word *Behold*, followed by a blank with a subsequent strange outbreak, *and see;* but only unite the words *Behold and see*, and the meaning is at once apparent. Yet the publishers have seen fit to continue this meaningless idea, not only once, twice, or even thrice throughout this truly beautiful inspiration, and the blame we shall be told should be attributed to Handel, who however, transcribed his inspired music as rapidly as pen would write, never dreaming probably that it would ever be reproduced by steam, or become a liberal source of revenue to publishers unborn. Why did not the musical editor who had courage

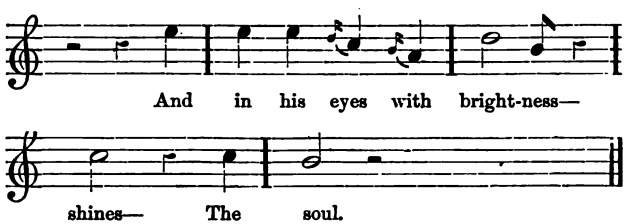
sufficient to make a pianoforte accompaniment (which it must be borne in mind Handel never wrote) for 'The Messiah,' turn his attention to the airs and recitatives of the work, and make good those deficiencies which were consequent upon Handel's insufficient acquaintance with the English language, and the marvellous rapidity with which he worked? In that case the melody last referred to would probably have appeared in some such form as:



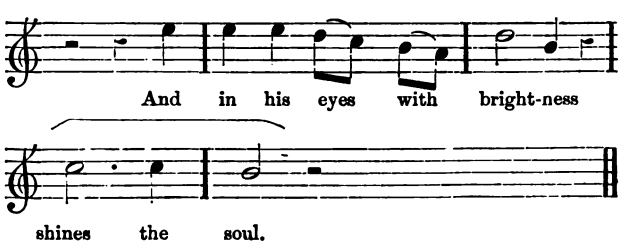
the *sforzando* mark over the word *His* in the last bar but one being necessary to atone for that

important word not having a place on an accented beat of the bar.

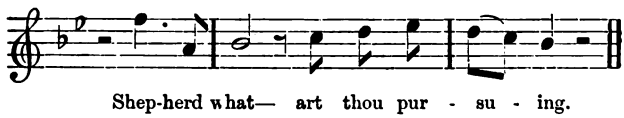
If it is not sacrilege to make a pianoforte arrangement of Handel's orchestral score accompaniment, there cannot be any harm in fitting the words to such accompaniments instead of leaving the recitatives and melodies to fit themselves in as they best can with the modern pianoforte score, and this amount of enterprise the public have a right to expect from the publisher. To take the case of another composer we should no longer be encouraged to sing 'And in his eyes with brightness—shines— The soul,' etc.



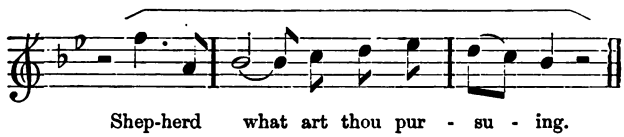
when 'And in his eyes with brightness—shines the soul,' as below



would be better; nor can the writer see why



is preferable to



Nor could anything probably be less artistic and more in bad taste than the manner in which that beautiful recitative, 'Thy rebuke hath broken His heart,' is continually being scattered world-wide by the music publishers. We are invited to sing the following fragmentary and consequently meaningless words: 'Thy rebuke—hath broken His heart—He is full—of heaviness—He is full—of heaviness—thy rebuke—hath broken His heart—He looked for some—to have pity on Him—but there was—no man—neither found He any—to comfort Him—He looked for some—to have pity on Him—but there was—no man—neither found He any—to comfort Him.' Surely nothing could be more absurd or more op-

posed to the solemnity of the words than so farcical an arrangement of them as the above, which, as I have said the publishers coolly enough sow broadcast for a public to devour as incogitantly and liberally as it pleases. Yet how young a musical apprentice could have shaped it into some such musical form as :—

Recit.

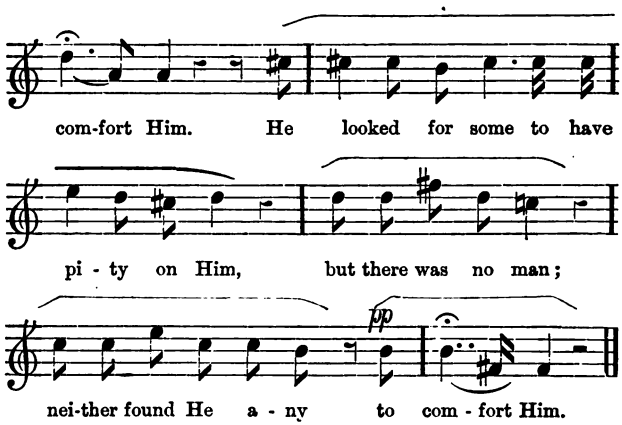
Thy re-buke hath broken His heart; He is full of

hea - vi - ness; He is full of hea - vi - ness;

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He look-ed for

some to have pi - ty on Him, but there was no

man; nei - ther found He a - ny to



But I have probably said enough: and have instanced sufficient examples to support the charge I prefer against certain publishers of lending their hands, wittingly or unwittingly to one of the most serious of the obstacles that check Musical Progress in this country. Of the significance of such an impediment to our Art's growth much could be written, but it will be sufficient to suggest a remedy for the evil, and that would be found if the publishers could be induced to destroy their present music-plates and commission some competent musician to edit the Oratorios with the view to bringing the recitatives and songs into some better shape for publication and wholesale dissemination. There would, per-

haps, be many things to be considered in the selection of such an editor and renovator, but fortunately we have not far to look for one, at least who might be safely entrusted with such a charge as that indicated. I refer to Mr. W. H. Cummings, whose ability as an accomplished musician and singer is known both to the professional and the outside world. How far that gentleman would entertain such a task I am unable to predict (indeed, it may be wrong of me to make this unauthorised use of his name), but I do so in the interests of Art; and as the publishers would seem to be without a sense of the situation in which they are placing us as a musical people, I hope I shall be forgiven for bringing under their notice the name of a competent guide who in an important degree could set us right in the eyes of the musical world, and relieve our rising generation of one of the most malignant of the traps which now exist for it to fall into. Mr. Cummings is an enthusiastic Handelian, and could render both Art and Artists invaluable aid in bringing his wide range of learning and experience to bear upon the works of the great Saxon master—not only in comparing the present editions with the original scores (many of which are, or were,

in his possession), and in giving the several recitatives and airs those touches which are indispensable for public performances and which might as well be made the property of the amateur, but also in phrasing and accenting them, and supplying the marks of expression which a vocalist should observe in singing the part of a Galatea, Judas, or Polyphemus, as the case may be. Then every vocalist in the land might purchase the 'Messiah,' 'Judas,' or 'Samson,' and begin committing the melodies and recitatives to memory, and no harm would be done; but with our present copies my advice to students is, 'Spare yourself the pains of studying any of the vocal numbers of an oratorio till you have first consulted a first-rate teacher upon the subject—otherwise you are certain to have to undo most of that which you have devoted both time, and lungs, and patience to accomplish.' In this way you will aim a sure blow at, perhaps, the most pernicious of 'musical commercialisms.'

* * * * *

I am not, as I have already said, anxious to be considered a pessimist in regard to English Musical life and work: nevertheless, there are several aspects of the matter to which exception can be taken, and in respect to which a voice

ought to be raised. Nor, indeed, should I be doing justice to my subject were I to omit to make reference to, and to throw some light upon those advertisements which are constantly appearing in the daily newspapers, offering to vocalists and instrumentalists opportunities so tempting that the outside public looks on with wonderment coupled with no little mortification at not being musically qualified to reply to such, while a large percentage of those to whom the announcements are addressed are easily inveigled into the nets laid for them. Of the class of advertisements to which I refer, the following are fair specimens:

STAGE. — Opera, Burlesque, Concerts. — WANTED, YOUNG LADIES, vigorous voices, to qualify for lucrative engagements. Elocution and singing taught. —Stamp.

THEATRES (professional). London. Immediate engagements. WANTED, AMATEURS and NOVICES. Lessons every day, elocution, acting, singing. Two guineas and part salary.

VOCALISTS or PIANISTS REQUIRED. Summer tour. Public or private introductions. Finishing lessons from Royal Academy Masters, or remuneration for services. Board and residence. No preliminary fees.

VOCALISTS WANTED.—A gentleman and lady, professional vocalists of standing, have vacancies for a few pupils, amateur or professional. The latter can be introduced at concerts, tours, to opera managers, etc. Royal Academy method.

TO VOCALISTS AND INSTRUMENTALISTS, *desiring a début*, a gentleman who is about to start a series of High-class Popular Concerts in London, requires the assistance of intending professionals, amateurs, in the performances. Finishing lessons will be given, and the artists will be qualified by first-rate masters. From £4 to £5 weekly may be earned in this way.

WANTED.—Good Voices and Pianists for finishing and bringing out at concerts and dinners.

Having recovered from that feeling of not unmixed surprise to which reference has been made, the thoughtful reader of these wheedling advertisements will no doubt say to himself, 'If the compilers of these notices are only as clever in the art of music as they are in the science of Advertising, it must prove a fine thing, financially and artistically for the aspiring talent to whom they are addressed.' There, however, his experience will probably end. Not so the reader for whom this class of advertisement is specially intended. He or she being fortified with a course or two of 'singing lessons' from Herr Vocali, or Signorina

Angelica, or some other 'celebrated' being, or having struggled through a few months of instruction in pianoforte-playing, with the result of being able (and willing) to play 'Home, Sweet Home' with variations—the aspiring talent who can accomplish this will straightway communicate to the addresses given in the advertisements, and from this time their troubles begin. Having got thus far into the net, the means of holding their prey is not a difficult task to these 'sharks.' An interview is, of course, necessary. This is arranged and duly kept: when a flattering description of proposed tours, town concerts and parties, provincial and seaside engagements for the summer with stray suggestions concerning the Albert, St. James's, and other Halls, with the Promenade Concerts for the autumn and winter, completely disarms the credulous youth or girl. The prey is caught! 'There is, of course, a small fee of five shillings,' is a remark that is now gently conveyed to the visitor; 'and,' the informant adds, 'if you would like to become one of my pupils I shall be pleased to take you upon *professional* terms.' This is a piece of sop. The sound of the word 'professional' to the ears of an over-strung and excited aspirant for public musical honours

is too much. With the idea that such a step will probably raise him or her in the estimation of this self-dubbed *entrepreneur*, an arrangement is come to for lessons at terms which are not unfrequently higher than he secures in a legitimate way either in the profession or out of it! Thus he pockets three or four sums of five shillings per diem—or he may receive more, for I need hardly say that the fee varies according to the appearance and credulity of the victim—besides the chance of gaining a pupil in the bargain.

I will not say that the *modus operandi* pursued by the authors of these coaxing advertisements is in all cases identical with the course I have traced out; but other instances differ only in a few minor and unimportant details. The prime object is undoubtedly the same, and that is to mulct young and inexperienced folk of their ready cash, and to secure pupils who would otherwise never dream of going to such masters, either from any reputation that may attach to their names of their own ability as musical artists, or of their cleverness in imparting artistic knowledge to other people. The truth is this: it is a swindling game, and to those who do not object to put their hands to it it is a profitable one. It, too, is far from being

played out—for London is a large place, besides which there are the suburbs and provinces teeming with fish ever increasing and ever ready to be caught in so fair a net as that which these fishers know only too well how to cast.

But the reader may be anxious to learn how the victims fare in the hands of these gentlemen—how far faith is kept with them, and whether the authors of these misleading announcements do not frequently find themselves in an intricate mesh from which they with difficulty extricate themselves. Well, a sort of slow-death process is adopted (broken, perhaps, by a little variety, which it is found expedient to afford in the shape of concerts and entertainments, of which more anon), and which process as a rule ends in the aspirants growing sick and tired at the sorry progress they make, and at having to wait so long for the realisation of those glowing prospects and enjoyable careers chalked out for them by their misleaders, and which seem as far off realisation as ever. Sick at heart with such long-deferred hope, they take the right step—after probably some twelve or eighteen months' lessons, which they have been induced to take and must pay for—of severing a connection

which ought never to have been made, and for which they have nothing to show but their dearly-bought experience, coupled with much food for reflection in the shape of wasted time, money, and energy, all of which might have been far more fittingly rewarded had it been directed to a sound and well-ordered course of study of the Art under some good and responsible master. Thus is created a vacancy into which the latest victim to these advertisements is pressed to walk!

Of the calibre of, and mode of bestowing the instruction imparted by these gentlemen to those whom they trap, perhaps the less said the better, for while no good could be written of it, a great deal that is unfavourable could be charged to it. Yet, as might be expected, they assume a high-handed policy with their pupils, not omitting to enlighten them with some general statement as that 'they must undo all they have hitherto been taught,' or one to the effect that he or she 'has a valuable natural organ, which, however, has been wrongly trained, and that a course or two of lessons such as will now be given will soon set matters right.' Under the pretext, therefore, that some preliminary preparation is absolutely necessary both in the interest of

the Singer ('who should never jeopardise his future greatness by appearing in public until he is quite fit!') and on account of the importance of the work for which he (or she) is intended, these much-to-be-pitied young people are cajoled into a fresh course of instruction, and on reflection find themselves pupils still instead of being as they had fondly hoped they would be, artists and performers, interpreters, and enlighteners of others.

The indifferent kind of instruction goes on, much to the bewilderment of the pupils who, not having intelligence enough to see through the kind of people by whom they have allowed themselves to be led astray, can scarcely be expected to make much of the information conveyed to them at the hands of 'professors' who themselves know but little or nothing of the phases of the Art in which they are ready to teach. After some months (or earlier, should the pupil show signs of restlessness), the comforting assurance is given to him (or her) that a public appearance might be advantageously made—a suggestion that is greedily accepted, together with the statement that 'the *début* will probably be attended by all the musical agents and "big-wigs" of the profession.' A hall is engaged, a programme is put together,

one or two second or third-rate artists (of whom there are plenty who are ready enough to sing for their expenses) are engaged to swell the programme and give to it a professional tone, and at length the impatient *débutant* bows to an audience consisting for the most part of personal and fellow-pupils' friends, and those who have come within the reach of the liberally scattered 'paper' by which the promoters fill the hall; for it need scarcely be pointed out that such exhibitions meet with but little favour with the ordinary public which, indiscriminate as it assuredly is, yet stops at the point of paying to hear the *protégés* of advertising 'sharks' and cheap-jacks. The performance takes place with the inevitable result—the *débutantes* grow nervous and do not do themselves justice—at least, they are so informed by the promoter: the second-rate professionals come off with flying colours amid so motley a group; but what is most important of all the shark has served his end, and that at no great cost. Faith has been kept with his students, they have had afforded them an opportunity of appearing in public at a 'high-class concert,' a leverage has been afforded to further study by the pupils, with consequently more fees to the professor—all

this has been achieved, and the cost of it all is well covered by a five-pound note. Another such sham performance is given in a few months, so that any new fry and the old may have no ground of breach of contract on the part of the promoter. Then comes the final performance of the season in the shape of a 'benefit' concert—not for those who for months past have been paying their fees for lessons and introductions which they would have been far better without—but a concert for the author of all this artistic mischief, in order that the only person who has throughout benefited by the transaction may be still further rewarded. And such is the rapacity of this monster that he does not scruple to foist tickets for this concert upon his young *clientèle* at prices which would obtain a comfortable seat at a Philharmonic Society's Concert. But these young and inexperienced folk have, as I have indicated, the one idea of exhibiting in public their musical cleverness, and they seem willing enough to do that much at any cost. It is not to be expected, then, that they will long be disregarded by a species of that genus *homo* that is to be found in every walk of life—and which lives by the credulity of others.

It is, of course, too much to hope that the perpetrators of this mischievous work will mend their ways, and loose their hold of a system that combines a light and interesting occupation with a profitable source of income. The remedy lies with those who are expected to fall into the traps which this scum of the musical profession lay for the unwary. Let the student then eschew such advertisements and the men who make them, and if there be any reader of this who is already enthralled in the meshes of one of these unprincipled men, let him drop him as he would a hot coal, otherwise what may be a bright musical future will probably be blighted, while the purse is sure to be 'tapped' and perhaps impoverished by these men.

It should be apparent to anyone of average intelligence that in a field of work so overcrowded as is the musical world, 'from £4 to £5 weekly' does not need to be advertised in order to find recipients, there being hundreds of highly-gifted vocalists and instrumentalists ready to snap up half such an amount weekly should the opportunity present itself, and though such have friends 'at court' ready to apprise them of any such openings, the chances which present themselves by no

means correspond with the demand. Nor are the number of public dinners given weekly so many, and the quantity of vocalists so small as to render it necessary to appeal for assistance in this direction. 'Dinner artists' constitute a specialty in London musical work, and although it is not an enviable occupation for a singer, there are dozens of quartett and glee parties whose ranks when empty, are recruited with our Cathedral and Church choristers, or if not these with that calibre of vocalist who though singing in public is rarely sought after as a public singer and soloist. These 'parties' canvass all the directions from which their class of work emanates, and it is as unlikely that anyone can be in the field commanding any excess of this work as it is that he would find it necessary to advertise for assistance to enable him to carry it out. Again, how is it possible in these hard times for persons to give to strangers 'Board and residence, introductions public or private, finishing lessons at the hands of Royal Academy masters, and remuneration without any preliminary fees'? Yet these are the 'advantages' offered by one of the advertisements which I have quoted, and which some people are foolish enough to waste their time

and money in answering. Then again, are not our stage-doors sufficiently besieged day after day by inquiring and anxious minds, begging for a livelihood as to place it beyond the pale of doubt whether there are London theatres where 'immediate engagements with salary' are waiting the asking by 'amateurs and novices'?

It is hard, indeed, to believe that young men and women can be led away by such palpable misrepresentations; but that such is the case is clear beyond a doubt. As the black-sheep of jobbing stock-brokers still have little difficulty in floating bubble companies, and in finding clients ready to pay pounds and shillings for share scrip in phantom mines—notwithstanding that this species of swindling has been fairly well exposed—so the men who choose to 'job' with our Art can do so with impunity, and like the illicit brokers can reap for their very reprehensible and degrading labours substantial if not honourable gains. But to conclude—for this chapter is already too long—experience is a dear school, and some folks will learn in none other; so it is that many more victims may yet be counted upon by these advertising sharks of the pro-

fession, and the 'Commercialism' which they may be said to be responsible for may be expected to die hard, or it may increase rather than wane.

CHAPTER VI.

'PIANOFORTES ON THE THREE YEARS SYSTEM.'

Pianofortes Necessary—High, Middle, and Lower-Class Purchases—Advertisements—Outlines of the 'Three Years System'—Mode of Procedure under the System—Dearness of the System—Incentive to Manufacturers of bad Instruments—Artistic Objections—The System in the Law Courts—Cases tried—A Landlord's Claim—How to Keep Clear of the Courts—Advice to Purchasers under the System.

THIS subject should rank properly as a 'Commercialism,' and as such should have appeared in the previous chapter; but that was already getting long, and on staying to consider all the bearings of this 'Three Years System,' it presented such formidable dimensions and seemed to be a 'Commercialism' of such real magnitude as to call for a chapter entirely to itself—so that more than one of its aspects might be brought under the reader's notice. Before proceeding far I may as well say at once

that the system commends itself to me but little, and there will not, I fear, be found much in its favour in the remarks I shall make concerning it. It is one of those creations assimilated with our age, noteworthy as this is for its combinations of the cheap and nasty, its veneered modesty and artificial sanctity.

The progress of musical taste in England has been no less remarkable in its effect upon the instrument-manufacturing interest than upon our social status. Thus this taste has made it well-nigh imperative upon a section of the community to provide themselves with music in the home for the delectation of their own immediate circle and that of their friends, while that progressive taste has also had the effect of attracting the poorer classes to a sense of the virtues of a household orchestra, and of prompting them to a spirit of emulation for the possession of this article, embodied in that highly respectableising piece of furniture—a Pianoforte. From these causes the growth of the pianoforte in England has been so rapid, its popularity so exceptional, that it is scarcely surprising that tradesmen who lay themselves out to make, buy, and sell this instrument should be found competing more or less successfully with a large demand, which has for

some time past existed, and still exists: for the penny whistle cannot be called a family instrument, neither can the drum, cornet, flute, concertina or triangle, while even the harmonium or parlour-organ give way in usefulness and adaptability for social musical gatherings to their more lengthily-compassed and sweeter-toned relation—the pianoforte.

To some folks pianofortes come much in the same way as the sun does to us all—as a matter of course; but the majority of people are much concerned when—their minds being bent upon having this luxury—they set about the acquisition of a pianoforte. With rich folk the course is pretty clear. If the instruments which have passed into their possession be of the same date as their plate—say, of the Queen Anne period—and having been condemned by the visiting *virtuoso* as being unequal to the demands of modern musical taste and skill, they have only to repair to Messrs. Broadwood's establishment where, having made a plain statement of their wants, they may count upon receiving an instrument which shall be in every respect worthy both the sum of money paid for it and the reputation of the firm from which it emanates. Or, if it be too much trouble to make a personal visit, there is always the

alternative of dropping a line of request to the most intimate *protégé*, asking him to look in at Broadwood's and select an Iron Concert-Grand at from 150 to 200 guineas, a trust, let me remark *en passant* which is rarely, if ever, abused by the musician, who knows quite well how to appreciate the graceful confidence of his patron.

But a more difficult task awaits the individual with but average means. Unprovided with that best of all guarantees to a good purchase (whether the object sought for be a matchless artificial tooth or an equally-rated pianoforte)—I mean a long purse—the middle-class purchaser is thrown very much on his own resources and his own judgment in selecting and purchasing this very desirable—and one may add, much-abused piece of furniture—a pianoforte. £25, £30, £40 or £50 are not extravagant sums with which to provide one's self when sauntering forth to a market for this modern offshoot of the harpsichord; nevertheless, there are no end of ways and directions in which the possessors of such amounts are invited to spend their money upon the objects of their temporary affections. Thus they may be attracted by an advertisement to a sale of house property and effects, among which there

is (of course) a pianoforte—such individuals never dreaming that instruments are 'put in' by makers at these sales, and there made to fetch a price which would be out of the question through the ordinary trade channels; or these individuals may attend an auction-room where there are periodical sales of pianofortes, etc., and there buy for some thirty pounds an instrument which has been forced up to more than its real value by interested people, or if not these, by the Jew element, who delight to see the promiscuous public burning its fingers with a purchase which has been taken from their grip. And there are other ways. There are the advertisements of 'Families going to India,' 'A lady in distress,' and 'a clergyman's widow,' all of whom wish to dispose of their doubly-braced, iron-strung, seven-octave, trichord, truss-legged, check-repeating cottage-pianoforte at half its original cost; or, if it is not a 'clergyman's widow' who is advertising the 'real bargain,' it is 'a landlady' who has seized a pianoforte, nearly new, for rent, which pianoforte is offered at £25, though its original cost was £70. Another way open to an intending purchaser is to go to one of the many advertising makers, of which there are some hundreds in London, and buy an instrument

from the shop or window just in the same way as one would buy a penny bun or a pen-wiper.

But another way is through the 'Three Years System,' of which many of my readers may know, and that from experience, more than I can tell them. Nevertheless, for the purpose of my book I will state briefly the outlines of the principle. As the exterior respectability of many of the thousands among whom we live, move, and have our being is not the result of the solid payments they make to their tailors and outfitters, but rather the outcome of a 'weekly instalment' system (which has a correlative among the lowest classes in the personage of the tally-man), neither do the majority of families who boast pianofortes, sewing-machines, and the like, become possessed of such articles at one leap. The price of them is too large to be paid by the purchaser at once, and therefore a contract is entered into by seller and buyer, by which, on consideration of certain periodical payments, and under certain conditions, the article in question becomes the property of the purchaser. In this way, more largely than any other, are pianofortes disseminated throughout this kingdom.

The 'Three Years System' is contained in a

few conditions after the manner of the following:

(*a.*) A reference, should the hirer be unknown to the firm.

(*b.*) A quarterly instalment payable in advance, with the option of the hirer to pay a larger sum each quarter, on which extra payments a discount is allowed.

(*c.*) An agreement, which the hirer signs, stipulating for the punctual payment of each instalment, and providing that the seller shall resume possession of the instrument if the payments are not continued. The hirer to take all reasonable care of the instrument—its loss by fire or otherwise to be borne by the hirer.

(*d.*) The hirer is not at liberty to sell or otherwise dispose of the instrument until the twelve quarterly payments are completed.

We must now imagine A as the representative of a household in which music is henceforth to diffuse its magic power and enlightening influence. B we will regard as the dealer in pianofortes. After inspecting several instruments, ranging in price from twenty to fifty guineas, A, with a liberality in this matter which does him credit—although his large-mindedness is misplaced—determines to

have a fifty-guinea pianoforte on the 'Three Years System,' and B forthwith informs him that the quarterly payment will be four and a half guineas for three years, which to the unthinking mind does not appear much, although on running through the figures one sees that even under such a 'favoured nation clause' a payment of eighteen guineas a year is obligatory for three consecutive years, till in all a sum of fifty-four guineas is found to be needed for an instrument the original price of which was fifty guineas, and which had it been purchased outright could have been bought at from five to seven per cent. cheaper for cash, while through 'the stores' the same article could probably have been secured at not less than a ten per cent. reduction, which would bring the cost down to something like £46. But wide as is the difference between fifty-four guineas (£56 14s.), and £46—and the reductions referred to are perfectly legitimate by the way, and quite open to the public—such discounts as twenty-five and even thirty-two per cent. are not unknown in the annals of the pianoforte trade; and I mention this fact, not because I am unaware that it is only through special channels that such reductions are secured, but because the

principle suggests—to my mind at least—the possibility of materially decreasing the prices for pianofortes. A radical change in this direction could not fail to act beneficially upon the pianoforte trade, and there can be no doubt that its effect upon Art would be equally marked and satisfactory; for any cheapening process which places such necessary things as pianofortes more within reach, not only extends the manufacture itself, but gives an impetus to the growth and progress of the Art that is quite as important—although it would scarcely be so regarded—as would be the discovery of some new chord. Pianofortes, good, bad, and indifferent, are at fancy prices —prices far beyond their worth, and very largely in excess of their cost; prices, moreover, which (though the public may have to face them) have no reference to the fair trading profit as between maker and buyer, but which are forced up so as to admit of the processes of commission through which they have to pass, and which professional men and women demand when selecting instruments, and for which custom the whole of the community suffers, although probably not two instruments in fifty that are sold in London throughout the day are bought through a

professional teacher, or undergo the rating of some twenty-five to thirty per cent. discount. There would be a great many more pianofortes sold than is now the case were the makers themselves to combine and do away with the commission system, and thus remove a not insignificant deterrent to a larger market, and an obstacle to direct or first-hand trading with the public. It is almost lamentable to reflect that on account of certain trade allowances and commissions the possessor of thirty or thirty-five guineas cannot buy even a decent pianoforte, or one that will not at the end of three or four years be irretrievably out of tune, affected in its speech if not occasionally dumb —in short, fit for nothing musically, and serving no good purpose save as a reminder of a bad bargain, or as illustrating the perverted use of much wood that would be better placed were it crackling within the bars of the family grate, or heating the kettle for a five o'clock tea. I am persuaded that it would not be impossible to manufacture and sell with a reasonable profit an instrument for £25 that should be as good in every way as many of those pianofortes which are now in the market for £40; but such a cheapened and improved article must not be subject to such

an astounding discount as thirty-two per cent. on the plea that the instrument is bought 'for exportation.'

But to return to our narrative. A will have duly received his instrument from B, and in the natural course of things will pay his quarterly instalments, though I venture to predict that he will not have gone far with these before—partly from the opinions of his friends, and partly from his own observations—it will begin to dawn upon him that the 'action' of the instrument would quite justify his entering upon an 'action' at law with B, and this feeling will increase to a culminating point by the period of the final payment, unless indeed A's pianoforte turns out considerably better than those cases which have come under my notice where pianofortes have been had on the 'Three Years System.'

And this leads me to the black spot of the 'Three Years System.' It is not the extracting of money from the pockets of those who can ill afford to lose it, the offering of apparently astounding—but illusory—liberality, or the over-charging of which complaint can best be made, since the remedy for such practices rests with the public, who have themselves to blame if they make such foolish bargains; but it is

the flooding of the market with inferior instruments, the vamping up of this staff of our musical life, the glueing together of unseasoned woods and common materials under a system of labour that can guarantee nothing but inferior workmanship and the carrying of false harmonics and untrue chords and intervals into the homes of hundreds of thousands of families—it is in this direction that the system works so much mischief, and is far more pernicious than when regarded from a mere financial point of view. Time can heal a weakened or even a crippled Exchequer, but there is no more cure for a musical ear that has become disordered and injured by a constant reception of unsound harmonics than there is for a mind that has grown sick and disheartened with appealing to an instrument the tones of which fail to answer to the call of the fingers, to say nothing of their ever reaching as far as the seat of all musical inspiration—the heart. Were the pianofortes, which are made to supply the demand created by this 'Three Years System,' known to remain things of beauty and joy—well, not for ever, but for some such reasonable a period as ten or fifteen years, the dearness involved in such a roundabout system of purchase would be of

less moment, but unhappily it has been found from experience that they can only be counted upon to last almost as long a time as the series of quarterly payments; and were a purchaser to think of making the whole business a subject for legal argument in one of her Majesty's Courts, it is only fair to admit that his instrument would be a thing of the past long before the suit could be fought out, and it might be as well for any intending litigant to bear in mind that the strings of his purse would be pulled pretty freely for such litigation, and that consequently they should be more substantial and more prompt to a call than were the 'strings' of that instrument which has mainly provoked his legal suit.

Some economists might question the advantages of any system which enabled comparatively poor people to run into debt, or to put it another way, that facilitated and encouraged tradesmen and working men, poor clerks, etc., in acquiring goods and so contracting debts which they are not prepared to discharge forthwith; but the 'Three Years System' has developed so largely, and is even now so much in vogue, that the economists would appear to be in the wrong, and the claims and advantages of the system incon-

testable. Viewing the matter from an Art basis, however, and losing sight of it as a trade dodge, it cannot but be regarded as an injurious system, fatal alike to the progress and reputation of Music in this country. There are no two opinions of its results upon the tastes and the æsthetics of the people, and this is the issue which should be considered before any question of mere financial accommodation. It would not be surprising to find those firms who practise the 'Three Years System' consoling themselves with the flattering unction that they are doing humanity and the State a service in furnishing means whereby the working-classes may provide themselves with pianofortes, just as the pioneers of cheap literature have rendered invaluable aid in educating the masses; but the pianoforte-makers will perhaps remember that the mere multiplying of instruments does not necessarily benefit the masses, any more than the sowing broadcast of cheap literature elevates and educates them. There is this condition—the literature must be *good* and *wholesome*, and so must be the pianofortes; and until such is the case, those who have to answer for the system must not be disappointed if they find those whose business it is to expose such pernicious

and extortionate practices, applying themselves to the task of laying bare its foul spots and missing no opportunity of censuring its promoters, however accommodating the method may be in the wisdom of the short-sighted thousands who patronise and thus encourage so baneful and so reprehensible—yet unfortunately not illegal—a system of trading.

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It will astonish nobody to learn that with a scheme liable to such objections, fraught with so many obligatory conditions, and open as it is to the many accidents of life that may occur during the period over which its working spreads, the 'Three Years System' has been a fruitful source of litigation, the advantages of which have been most on the side of the lawyers, while the system itself remains unpurified, and a section of the public is pledged to it as firmly as it ever was. To instance many of the cases where the workings of the system have been unravelled only with the aid of wig and gown might prove tedious to the reader, but a few instances may not be unwelcome, affording as they do proofs of the dangers attending the system, and as furnishing examples where undue familiarity with its tenets have led to disastrous results. The

cases will serve to show those who read them, that the 'Three Years System' is surrounded with an air of legal severity, and that any attempt to tamper, or to take ever so slight a liberty therewith will prove an expensive experiment. Moreover, the cases are interesting as showing the unforeseen questions and disputes that will arise out of matters of the kind, however carefully and securely they may appear to be wrapped in the protection of the Law.

Here is a case that occupied for a time one of the suburban County Courts. A gentleman, X. Y. Z., attracted no doubt by the numerous advertisements of pianoforte manufacturers who practise the system of hire with option to purchase, negotiated with A. and B., a well-known firm, for a pianoforte, towards which, in the course of nearly two years, he paid a sum of £29, the value of the instrument being appraised at thirty-six guineas. The balance of £8 16s. he was quite ready to pay, but instead of assenting to this, the plaintiffs, A. and B., demanded the pianoforte, and raised an action for recovery. It transpired that the agreement, by virtue of which defendant hired the pianoforte at £1 10s. a month, had a note attached to it to the effect

that if he continued to pay the monthly sum until the whole value was paid, he was then to keep the instrument; but the plaintiffs' solicitor argued that this had 'nothing to do with the agreement'—a style of reasoning which failed to impress the Judge, who probably took the common-sense view that so important a note could not be added to an agreement and then held to have nothing to do with it, for he intimated that in his opinion the action was not creditable to A. and B., and non-suited them on the ground that they could not give strict proof of a legal demand upon X. Y. Z. for the return of the pianoforte; and so soon as a legal demand could be made it was made and refused, a new action in *detinue* being immediately brought. At this second trial these facts, among others, were elicited. The agreement was dated in 1863, and had the instalments been regularly kept up, the last would have been paid in October, 1865. A considerable portion of the money was then unpaid, but A. and B., the plaintiffs, took no steps to recover the instrument. They had since received numerous payments—one as lately as the year of the action (1868), and had altogether received £29, the defendant, X. Y. Z., having since offered to pay the

balance of the price of the instrument. Letters were produced in which A. and B., addressing Z. Y. Z., spoke of 'your piano,' and of sending 'our man' to make some alterations for which X. Y. Z. was to pay. The Judge, in giving judgment, said if the pianoforte belonged to the plaintiffs it had been on hire from 1863 down to the present time, and there would be £89 due for the hire, less the £29 they had received. They had, however, set up no such claim as that. It was clear that by their not having demanded the instrument in reasonable time after the time expressed in the agreement had expired, they had waived their rights under it. Their acceptance of numerous payments afterwards, and the writing of their letters, all together went to show that they had converted the hiring into a sale. The judgment, therefore, was for defendant.

The Queen's Bench Division was the scene of another interesting case which had been brought there, and which raised a question under the contract of 'hire and sale.' A, a well-known 'Three Years System' man, let B have one of his sixty-guineas pianofortes on the following terms, which B signed :

'(i.) That on the sum of sixty guineas

being paid to them in twelve instalments, each on the expiration of each three calendar months for three years, the pianoforte shall belong to B. (ii.) In case of default in the punctual payment of any instalment, the instalments previously paid shall be forfeited to A, who thereupon shall be entitled to resume possession of the instrument; the understanding being that until full payment of the sixty guineas the piano is to be A's property, and as only lent on hire to B. (iii.) That in the meantime B will take reasonable care of the instrument, and in case of loss or damage by fire, he will bear all the risk. (iv.) It is understood that as the piano is only on hire, the hirer is not to be at liberty to sell or dispose of it.'

This agreement, B, as has been said, signed, whereupon it was required by A that B should give a surety, which he did in the person of C, who accordingly signed, at the back of the agreement, this memorandum: 'I hereby guarantee the payments named in the agreement within, which I now endorse.' Some of the instalments were paid, and then a fire occurred, by which the pianoforte was virtually destroyed, being so damaged as to be useless; and, thereupon, A sued both B and C in the County Court for 'the value of the

pianoforte' thus destroyed. The judge held, however, that though B was liable for the value, which he assessed at £35 10s., C was not liable except for 'the payments;' and as only one payment was due at the time of action, and that was paid into Court, he gave judgment against B, but in favour of C, considering that when the pianoforte was destroyed, though B was liable for the value, yet that the periodical payments, for which alone C was liable, ceased. Whereupon, A's lawyer moved to set aside this judgment for C, urging that C as well as B was liable: payments meaning any moneys payable under the agreement in any event. But the Judges were of a different opinion, and thought that the County Court Judge was right. B, no doubt, was liable to make good the loss; but C did not guarantee that—he only guaranteed the payments, *i.e.* the instalments payable under the agreement, which ceased to be payable when the instrument was destroyed. The application, therefore, was refused, and the judgment in favour of C confirmed, A being remitted to his remedy against the hirer, B.

In the same Court has been settled the question of a landlord's right to seize or hold a hired pianoforte for rent, due from a tenant

whose rent is in arrear. This case showed that X occupied lodgings in Y's (the defendant's) house at a weekly rent. X brought a pianoforte with him into the house, which instrument he had hired from Z, the plaintiff. One day the plaintiff sent two men to the house in question to fetch away the pianoforte, when the defendant Y's wife met the man in the passage of the house, outside the room tenanted by X, where the piano was, and having been informed of their object, said in the presence of X, who was at the door of the room: 'The pianoforte should not leave the house unless what was owing from X for rent and board were paid.' The wife was acting by Y, the defendant's, authority, and there was rent due from X. The plaintiff, Z, having brought an action for the 'conversion' of the piano, the defendant justified the detention as a distress, and the Judge directed a verdict for the defendant, Y—the landlord: holding that there might be a distress without actual seizure, and that what had occurred amounted to a distress.

Another case for the lawyers arose out of the insolvency of a Mr. B., who hired a pianoforte from A. B. C. and Co. Four months previously to his bankruptcy B., the debtor, hired

the instrument upon the following written terms: £15 a year for three years by equal monthly payments of 25s., at the expiration of which time the piano became the absolute property of the hirer; but in case the instalments were not paid, or in the event of the death, bankruptcy, or insolvency of the hirer before the expiration of the time, A. B. C. and Co. were to be at liberty to determine the hiring and take possession of the instrument. There was no special mark or label on the piano to show that it was not the property of the debtor. Upon the bankruptcy A. B. C. and Co. removed the piano from the debtor's premises. The trustee claimed the instrument as being within the 'order and disposition' of the debtor, but evidence of a custom of letting pianos on such terms was furnished by A. B. C. and Co., who filed affidavits made by various pianoforte manufacturers in London, Sheffield, and other towns, who deposed to the custom for upwards of fourteen years. Finally it was held that the custom was sufficiently established, and one which the ordinary creditors of a bankrupt must be reasonably presumed to have known, and accordingly that the agreement for hire was valid, and did not

come within the mischief contemplated by the Bankruptcy Act, 1869.

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A very pretty series of disputes—yet useful as showing that one has only to get into the thick of the 'Three Years System' to gain an extended experience with legal charges and law courts' practice, combined with much pleasing excitement, and an acquaintance with the officials and frequenters of our courts of justice. These are associations and experiences, however, in respect to which the majority of people would wish to enjoy an immunity, preferring rather to spend their spare hours in the pleasant atmosphere of their home circle, the air of which is not less pleasant for blending agreeably with the tones of a pianoforte that can boast no legal history or notoriety, and which fails to suggest to paterfamilias reflections of wasted time, an unpaid Solicitor's Bill of Costs, and a prospective appeal to a superior Court. Of course, a pianoforte obtained on the 'Three Years System' is not of necessity to become a subject of dispute in a judicial arena, otherwise the system could never find so many adherents and patrons, added to which is the fact that the manufacturers themselves are cautious enough to refrain from rushing into

the publicity which a law case entails—for though they may win a suit, the inevitable *exposé* by the newspapers, and the revelations drawn out during the trial, with the often far from complimentary remarks which are elicited from the Judge, do an incalculable amount of harm to the system, which harm, by the way, it is only to be regretted is not more permanent, instead of being of such a transitory character that after the space of some few weeks' lull the entire matter passes out of the recollection of the public mind—nevertheless the legal aspect of the pernicious system is not the one which should be principally regarded. The purchase of a pianoforte is a matter which should be as properly transacted without the aid of the Law as should the buying of a joint of meat, and intending purchasers of pianofortes do wrong when they go to that market which may eventually bring their purchase into the Supreme Court of Justice. The two prime conditions in adding a pianoforte to one's worldly goods are these: Firstly, that the instrument shall be of good value for the money; secondly, that it shall be capable of giving forth sound music. For the first of these conditions it is not necessary to spend large sums of money—for fifty pounds cash spent in a

judicious manner and in a good market will, the writer ventures to predict, purchase for a family a cottage pianoforte that will serve the musical requirements for the life-time of the family for which it was bought. And who shall say that a life's music is dear at fifty pounds? As to the second condition, the pianoforte must be of sound and well-seasoned materials, substantially built, capable of answering to the demands of a master of the instrument, and above all able to stand in tune and to remain equally balanced throughout its register. It need have no outward embellishment, and the fact of the case being of walnut, rosewood, or ebony is of no moment from a musical point of view.

To those people who in spite of what has been said insist upon purchasing a pianoforte on the 'Three Years System,' a few parting words may be addressed. Never take advantage of a temporary cessation of the few last payments. Take care that the final payment is made in good time. See that after the final payment the instrument is properly conveyed to you, and made legally your property. Don't offend, much less break, any of the conditions upon which the pianoforte is hired. And, finally, if you are a busy man, with no taste for legal

badgering and the thousand-and-one irritations of litigation, don't be a guarantee either for the payments for, or the welfare of, an instrument.

It is an ungrateful task to write harshly of men or systems, but times occur when it is impossible to do other than face difficulties, and when it becomes a matter of duty not to turn away from unthankful work. It is the finding out of plague-spots, the stirring-up of muddy pools which leads ultimately to their extermination. Such a nuisance is this detestable system which a modern demand has created. It is only right, therefore, that the evil should be more generally understood, more thoroughly and persistently exposed, and that the public should know that the state of things is one of its own creating, and that no amendment is possible unless they turn and repent—for no individual or firm manufacturing pianofortes can wholly be blamed for grasping at profits arising out of an unwise and unsound demand on the part of a too eager and clamorous public.

CHAPTER VII.

AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS.

Origin of the Terms—The 'Professional's' View of Music—The 'Amateur's' View—The Professional of the Past—The Present-Day Professional—The Relations of both Bodies—The Amateur's Position—The Incompetent Professional—Amateurs the Back-bone of the Art—Amateur Element of Choral Societies—The 'Amateur-ferox'—Mutual Dependence of both—A better 'Professional' Wanted — Consideration from Amateurs—Semi-Amateurs underworking Professionals—A Conciliatory Course.

I HAVE already referred in previous chapters to some of the unfavourable influences which mar our musical system, and which seriously prejudice the healthy life and growth of our Art. These may be considered as compassing or surrounding the Art, but in the present chapter I will ask the reader to follow me into the arena of practical Art, and consider an aspect of our subject which ought not to be passed unnoticed. I mean the question of the

relationship of Amateurs and Professionals in Musical England—a phase which will, I think, be found to afford ample ground for consideration, while the unsatisfactory state of its aspects and of the relations existing between the professional and non-professional elements will dispense with any need of apology for entering upon what some may be disposed to regard as a delicate question. With the permission, then, of both parties, the writer will proceed.

Of people who concern themselves with Music there are two kinds—Amateurs and Professionals. An equally appropriate title which could be granted them would be Meddlers and Makers, although the epithets might hardly be regarded as complimentary by the Professionals who 'make' Music or by the Amateurs who 'meddle' with it.

The terms 'Amateur' and 'Professional' have given thoughtful minds some concern: but one need not, perhaps, here enter upon a long explanation of their meanings. The Latin word *Amator* will help us with the former, though we must not forget that the application of this word to an art or pursuit carries with it a disinterestedness in so far as pecuniary gain is concerned; so that a Musical

Amateur is an admirer of Music who studies the Art from the pure love of the thing, and not from any money-making motive.

A 'Professional' views Music from a somewhat—we will not say an entirely—different standpoint. He pursues it with the avowed purpose of 'making it pay'—of earning money out of it—of getting a living by it. He does not apply himself to its practice for mere amusement, or for his love of the Art (which love be it remembered can be, and no doubt invariably is, quite as sincere in the Professional as in anybody else), but because he has to feed and clothe himself, and the means through which he finds he can best accomplish this is by 'professing' Music, just as men of other walks of life profess Theology, Law, and Medicine.

This is the salient point in which the present-day Professional differs from the Amateur; but there were in past times many others in which they differed—a few of which can be touched upon.

It used to be a generally accepted notion that the Professional was an individual invested with a sort of supernatural power—more or less developed—which enabled such an one to surmount certain difficulties con-

nected with his Art which ordinary mortals could not overcome; or he was regarded as a man cast in a different mould, of a higher musical calibre, and of a temperament rare among men. Hence he was destined to be a musician, and a qualified practitioner in the Art. It need hardly be said that this idea has now exploded, and that the implicit trust placed in the artistic merits and qualifications (when these are met in the present-day Professional) is not based upon any such romantic calculation as that described.

Another distinguishing feature of the past Professional had to do with his social position. In this respect he became an object of sympathy, if not of pity. The eye of compassion rested upon him, and regarded him with a leniency truly remarkable. All his misdeeds were glossed over because he was a musician. He could be, and he was, untidy and dirty, yet nobody remonstrated. The etiquette of society did not concern him—he was exempt from it. Yet patrons gathered round him, and charitably entertained him at their tables, which generosity was frequently confirmed with presents of clothes, wine, and money—gifts by the way which their fortunate recipients by no means regarded as of too delicate a kind to receive.

Thus our professional friend came off exceedingly well. Nobody ever dreamt of going to him for a subscription to a charity: he never kept accounts: no one pressed him for debt, as he was looked upon as an individual scarcely responsible for his actions, and lost to everything else save the thoughts of his Art: a being who cared not an atom for his looks or his personal appearance, and who had consequently devoted more time to his Art—one whose whole life had been spent in the study and practice of harmonics, but whose literary education had given him little or no concern, and occupied only a small area within the limits of the three R's.

This race, however, is fast dying out: we are in a state of transition—and the next generation of musical professors will be one of quite a different stamp. Thanks to the progress of Education generally, the Professional of to-day is not absolved from the duties of life; on the contrary, he is subjected to the same laws which govern men of other liberal professions; and this changed social status can be best gathered from the fact that he is now admitted into, and recognised by, the highest circles of society, whereas it was the custom to smile on him from a lofty eminence and to

feed him with bread and butter, with 'sack' or its modern equivalent, in the servants' hall.

This changed position, therefore, is certainly one for the better.

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Considering that the Art of Music is one left entirely between the Professionals and the Amateurs, it is matter for regret that these bodies cannot govern the Art successfully among themselves. That they do not do so is no secret. They are constantly falling out —ever at variance the one with the other. There seems to be no middle course which they both can fall into, or if such a course exists, and both sides adopt it, it is quickly forsaken and made untenable for one side or the other; and this is all the more remarkable since the two bodies are so much dependent upon each other. It would be a sad time for the Professional without the Amateur. The man who makes music would fare badly indeed if there were no rich Amateurs to patronise him. Amateurs (as I have written elsewhere), properly so called, are to the musical profession almost like the air it breathes. Without them not only could the professors barely live, but a most powerful stimulus to the creation

of Music might be lost. Yet, Professionals and a class of semi-Professionals, who contrive to make more noise critically than musically, continue to write in a most depreciatory strain of the Amateur; who in his turn, however, sets no better example, and knows no limit to the many hard things which he can say concerning the Professional.

To name all the causes for this display of animosity would prove a task which few people would care to have set them. There are, however, some prominent aspects of the matter which lie near the surface, at which it is not difficult to arrive.

It must be borne in mind that the Amateur of Music differs in many respects from the amateur of other arts, or sciences; nor is it so much to his personal leanings as to the varying character of the Art of which he boasts an amateur's proficiency, that this distinction is due. No one can prevent the Amateur from drifting into an Amateur-professional if he wishes so to do: in fact, his Art prompts him to this; and such, to tell the truth, is just what many Amateurs do. They learn a little music—they frequently wish to impart some of that knowledge to others. The amateur who paints, or who chisels marble, cannot

however, sell his pictures or his busts and groups unless he shall have gone far enough along the tedious road of study to qualify himself in his particular art-work, and thus be enabled to stamp his productions with an air of marketable value and artistic excellence. It is not so in Music. Jones gets a smattering of knowledge in music practical and theoretical: no one can prevent him setting himself up as an instructor in the Art. If Jones has brains he may take half a dozen singing lessons from a good master (should he have no conscience he will probably only read-up his subject), and with the aid of a little cleverness on the key-board of the pianoforte he may mislead many people, hoodwink the unwary, get many pupils at very respectable fees, and gain a good livelihood! Can an amateur-painter do that?

The result is this: Professionals proper take, naturally enough, a very determined attitude with these invaders—an attitude, it must be added, which is not always creditable, and is least calculated to bring about any satisfactory solution of the difficult question of Amateur and Professional.

Music is a strange Art in this respect. In nearly all other arts the student must have

made no little progress towards perfection, or at least he must have gone through some years of study and preparation, ere he can even 'toddle,' much less walk and run, in the track which he has picked out for himself. As for the Musicians, it is not so with them. They have no specified qualification. There is no prescribed limit indicating where their competency begins or where their incompetency ends. The consequence is there is no possible check on the number of its Professors; and from this fact the Professional's good-natured friend (the Amateur) has derived his assertion that their knowledge stops at 'professing.'

Here, then, is one sore point—perhaps the sorest—between the two classes. And the multifarious ways in which the Amateur is constantly treading upon the toes of the 'Professional,' when the former *does* assume the semi-professional character, might even be recorded, did space permit. As it is, we are led to another point of controversy, namely, the comparative qualifications and abilities of the Amateur and Professional.

There can hardly be two opinions as to the direction in which most people would look for the highest artistic proficiency and skill; but it is not so clear that we should find Profes-

sional cleverness marvellously superior to that of the Amateur. The latter knows the Professional's weak points, and while he will praise and respect those who are *facile princeps* in the profession, he does not forget that the majority of these 'professing' musicians are far from being as they should as practising musicians; for the new status musician is hardly yet a *fait accompli;* the age of examinations and Art Degrees for the musician can only be said to have taken good root (the fruit thereof we must be content to wait for), and the field of music is still crammed with a set of men calling themselves 'Professionals,' and against whom the Amateur very justly raises his voice, and expresses his conviction that their knowledge *does* stop at 'professing.'

That these will eventually be starved out there can be but little doubt, but the fact remains that a large percentage of those people who teach Music are without the slightest form of credential, and can give no more proof of their ability to instruct others than their own personal assurance of their wonderful cleverness and talent. The Amateur argues in the existence of various degrees of Professionals, but that very few of these have to be passed over before arriving at that point

where knowledge gives way to professing. He may be right or wrong; but there can be no doubt that the Professional would do himself and his sect no harm were he to look to his laurels and place himself beyond the pale of the Amateur's reproach. True it may be that the Amateur goes to his musical work and study in fresher condition and under more favourable circumstances; he may from his more easy mode of life be able to devote more time to the Art; he can probably afford to call more frequently upon his purse for the acquisition of knowledge, and he may be able to study when he pleases, and is not compelled to work by the veritable midnight lamp, or after a hard day's work of teaching with its attendant wear and tear; but the Professional should remember that these are vantage-points which it is his duty to contend against. That anyone depending upon an Art for a subsistence ought not to have his superiority therein questioned even temporarily by an Amateur, needs, we should hope, no argument; yet it is the case that in Music we have an Art of which very many of the Professors in the present day might quite consistently change places with the Amateur workers thereof!

It is to be feared that the spirit of pride in

their Art is not sufficiently widespread among Professionals. It is not necessary to enter here upon the details of that study and perseverance by which the highest in the Art have won their eminence, or to speak of that continued application which enables them to maintain their superior position; but this industry is far from being general among Professional musicians, and it is to be regretted that the many who have acquired a certain amount of musical skill and knowledge—sufficient, perhaps, to enable them to set up as teachers and 'professors'—do not themselves continue to study and improve instead of trading for a whole life-time upon their limited stock-in-hand.

While Professionals as a body fail to impress unbiased minds with an unqualified sense of their worthiness musically, it cannot be denied that the relation of the Amateur to Musical Art in this country is of the most satisfactory kind. He is, as it were, the backbone of its progress. It has been argued that Amateurs, while they are very useful people, are yet like Lawyers and Doctors—only to be called in when they are wanted; but this is, indeed, a shabby estimate to make of the Professional's real friend—one, too, who never flinches from

helping him and showing him his way financially, if not musically.

Of the many ways in which the Amateur well serves the Art, much might be said. How great an impulse this species of musical workers has given to Musical Art in this country during, say, the last ten years! They have driven it to its present promising state, and have, as it were, goaded the 'Professional' element by their emulating spirit and determination to leave as small a gap as possible between themselves and the Professional. How laudable, too, is the industry with which the Amateur studies and practises in order to fit himself for the more perfect enjoyment of musical works! How beneficial and how widespread is the influence of the Amateur's work! Truly it may be said that Amateurs are the people for whom Professionals exist. They, indeed, are the ultimate cause of all Music being made. They ennoble Art, excepting perhaps a few of them who take music lessons—cheap ones and dear—without being in the least degree interested in the progress of Musical Art. They take instruction from Sir 'This' and Signor 'That' simply as a means of advertising their wealth, and without possessing the least yearning towards per-

fection in their studies. These people do not benefit Art, but instead they become the rotten supports of a set of men who prosper while Art suffers—men who have no care for the tendency of Art so long as their fees roll in. But the true Amateurs who toil with delightful labour at all phases of musical work, not alone to please others, nor to gratify their personal vanity, but to enable them to dive more deeply into the almost inexhaustible mines of musical wealth—these are they who exalt the Art, and who go far to save it from being desecrated by every avaricious 'maker' and vain 'meddler.'

Nor can we estimate too highly the value of those well-organised Choral Societies (the outcome of Amateur interest) so numerous throughout the United Kingdom, and which season after season devote their time, money, and intelligence to the interpretation, not alone of well-known works, but also of smaller and less famous scores which would otherwise rarely, if ever, get a hearing.

But while this is a species of Amateur which every Professional delights to find himself amongst, there is another genus—the 'Amateur-ferox' who has not a good word to say for anybody—Professionals good or bad,

or indeed Amateurs, unless they happen to belong to his own malignant species. He would pull the 'Messiah' from its place in the popular heart to substitute somebody's Mass which has the extraordinary merit of never having been heard. These are the Amateurs who manage the paper warfare when our musical periodicals open their pages to a ventilation of the subject, 'Amateurs *v.* Professionals;' who spend very little money in the acquisition of musical knowledge, tools, or compositions; who make more noise critically than musically; who have heard everything, but who can interpret nothing; who can tell you the whole secret of the 'music of the future,' and far more than ever Mendelssohn knew about the key of F sharp minor; while as to Fugues, they know, and have heard, every Fugue which Bach or Jomelli ever wrote, but strangely enough they cannot describe the difference between a tonal and a real fugue!

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Seeing how much the Professional and the Amateur are mutually interested, it is, perhaps, not too much to hope that they will come sooner or later to some better understanding. They both render good service to the Art, and as the future of Musical England promises to

assume much wider and loftier proportions than heretofore, there ought, certainly, to be some better feeling between the powers upon whom this future depends. The best means to this end would probably be for each side to entertain and exercise some further consideration for the other.

It would not be possible to lay down a code of hard and fast rules for either side to observe, but it may safely be stated that less mud-throwing on both sides would probably soon be found to have a beneficial effect. At present there is a good deal of sentiment pervading the Amateur and Professional elements of Musical England, which is suggestive of the old fable of the Belly and the Members; but the exercise of a little common sense would easily remove such a misconception. There will always be some quarrelling and newspaper warfare on both sides: and the lesser stars of the profession—who, having no lustre of their own, borrow their brilliancy from the greater orbs of their world—will continue to pour their vituperations, refined and unrefined, upon the heads of the Amateurs, and will endeavour to persuade the higher grade of their craft (who, be it remembered, do not live in perpetual fear of, and antagonism with, the Amateur) to do the same.

Perhaps a good plan would be for those high in the profession themselves to set about cleansing the Augean stable, by establishing some plan by which the incompetent and unlearned in the Art should be ousted from professing it, much in the same way as the unfit members of the bee tribe are forced from the hive when they give evidence of incapacity or insubordination.

Would it not be possible for a Council of leading Musicians, technical and theoretical, to fix a standard of excellence which shall qualify the future professional? If there is to be a future for Music in England, something must be done to make imperative upon teachers and professors of the pianoforte, for instance, a certain standard of knowledge and skill, so that not every conceited and 'hard-up' dabbler, nor every dolt who is too stupid to do more than pick out a few chords and accompaniments on the pianoforte, may don the appellation of 'Professor,' and trade upon the ignorance or weakness of thoughtless parents and foolish guardians, to the cost of the musical organism of the scholar, the Art, and all concerned, except, of course, the 'Professors.' Some such test-mode, which the existing systems of musical examinations do *not* meet—

it being well-known that the Universities' Musical Degrees may be obtained for theory alone, no proficiency as executants being required of the candidates—would guarantee the next century Professional.

Now for a few final words about the Amateur. There are many ways in which such an one is constantly encroaching, so to speak, upon the preserves of the Professional, thereby adding no little injury to that insult which it is alleged the Amateur is persistently hurling at the Professional. To give detailed instances bearing out this point would be trying to the reader. It will suffice to say that the aggression finds its way into all musical work—in the teaching of music, in concert work, operetta business, organ-playing, church-choir training, singing, and the like—by participating in which the Amateur (or rather that species thereof which allows itself to drift into the Amateur-professional) secures no small percentage of musical work, preventing its reaching those Professional hands into which it would otherwise fall. This feat is accomplished by underworking the Professional, having first forsaken the honourable title of Amateur, and assumed the *rôle* of half Amateur, half Professional, so that he becomes neither

one thing nor the other, and is certainly no longer entitled to be classed with that respected body of workers who study music for the pure love they have for it. This species of Amateur not having to depend entirely for his livelihood upon what he may gain by music, is in a position to accept in payment for his services whatever remuneration those hiring him may choose to bestow. Such action, it must be admitted, gives the Professional real ground for complaint. This kind of thing, too, exists to a much larger extent in the musical world than is generally known : indeed, it is a most sore spot, and, as has been already pointed out, is one of those directions in which Music stands peculiar to other Arts and Professions.

That such semi-Amateurs are in the wrong in thus entrenching upon the interests of the Profession, and for underselling the Professional, is scarcely open to doubt : yet, they say among themselves, No ! The Profession and its Professors look upon us as legitimate spoil during our years of training, to extract from whom as many guineas as possible is the correct thing. Surely we cannot be blamed for seeking to recoup a portion of this expense as soon as we are in a position to do so?

Such reasoning, too, is not altogether with-

out force. No doubt *some* amount of personal vanity, and pride in showing what he can do, with that dislike to expenditure without some return for the outlay (a feeling more or less inherent in us all), do contrive to prompt this species of Amateur to any remunerative use of his expensively acquired knowledge. Nor is such a proceeding far wrong, provided such an one adheres to 'Professional terms,' and that he does not undertake duties at a rate of remuneration which, however agreeable such may be to him, yet preclude the possibility of the Professionals even entertaining the same. Where there is no underworking, the Professional has little just cause for complaint: for the field of Music is large enough for many workers, and it is far more satisfactory to find engaged therein any number of competent native Amateurs than to see something like three-fourths of its business falling into the hands of undeserving foreigners and those who have little but their marvellous assurance to recommend them. Because A deals in rams' horns and indigo for say six hours out of twelve, surely B cannot reasonably maintain that he shall not cultivate Music in himself or others for the remaining six hours which he has at his disposal? Yet this is the very

condition which that section of Professionals who find it worth their while to war with the semi-Amateur would seem to demand; though whatever may be the strong points in their case, it is very certain that they have not common-sense in their favour. Let this species of Amateur, therefore, be careful that (in undertaking musical work which he feels would otherwise fall into Professional hands) he also insists upon a Professional rate of remuneration, which, if he succeeds in securing, cannot lay him open to any very serious false position.

How to remove the sore that undoubtedly exists between this class of semi-Amateurs and the Professional would be for the latter to discover: and he would do well to so improve the artistic condition of his class as to make some much wider gap than now exists between the two classes. Such a prevention would be better than any cure that might stamp out both the active and passive Amateur, who, as we have seen are so essential a prop to Music in this country. Moreover, the effort to substitute a more marked line of competency between the two bodies would mean a great impetus to Music as an Art. The Professional would be placed in a more satisfactory

position, and one by which the confidence and esteem now only reposed in the few would be extended over the entire body of practising musicians; while Amateurs of all grades would also then be saved all further ground for reproach and comparative criticism, and in addition would have before them a higher standard by which to work and study: and which superior goal let it be hoped they would neither grow alarmed at nor regret, or fail thereto to aspire and ultimately reach.

CHAPTER VIII.

SINGERS AND SINGING.

The Antiquity of the Art—Its uncertain Character—Characteristics of Different Voices—The 'Methods of Singing—The Field of Singing in England—Obstacles to the Acquirement of the Art—Wanted, a Singing School in London—Difficulty in getting Sound Instruction—An Aspirant's Troubles—Amateur and Professional Singers—Advertising Masters—Advice to Intending Students—The Amateur's Duty towards the Professional.

In the previous chapter I made an allusion to the fact that the preserves of Professional musicians were not infrequently encroached upon by Amateur poachers, an idea which it seems to me might be thought out at greater length in the present chapter—Singing being a direction in which the two elements often meet and sometimes clash; for the border-line dividing Amateur and Professional Singing is a no more direct or decided one than that distinguishing amateur from professional acting.

With the reader's permission I will preface my subject with a few general remarks concerning Singing.

English people may be divided into two classes—those who sing, and those who do not: while a classification of the first of these divisions would give the distinctive heads—those who *can* sing, and those who *cannot*. It is among those who can sing that we find the Amateur and the Professional Singer, of whom, as well as of a few of the aspects of the Singing Art as it is embodied in both these, this chapter will treat.

We shall, perhaps, meet with but little contradiction in stating that of all the Arts that of Singing is presumably the most ancient—having an origin the period of which is far removed from this nineteenth century age. This fact would be the more patent were anyone bold enough to venture upon the task of tracing the course of the Singing Art. It would be a thankless work, and the adventurer would soon find himself surrounded with a maze of myths and legends from which he would be only too glad to extricate himself. The truth is, Singing was coeval with the Creation. Song is but a form of speech: and as the first of humanity possessed the power

of speech, then we may be quite sure that they were able to express such Speech in tones or song. Of what that Singing consisted, however, or how far it approached anything like an Art, are points which need not here be considered.

The reader's attention has been called to this point of the antiquity of Singing or Song, in order to show merely, that of all the Arts, or perhaps a better term would be accomplishments, that of Song has the merit of the longest life-time—for which reason it might be regarded as an Art of which we knew most, when in reality the case is just the reverse. Singing, which goes so far back for its origin, is comparatively speaking still wrapped in mystery —not alone to the world at large, but even to professional vocalists. Most, if not all, other Arts and Sciences are fairly within the grasp both of those who profess them, and of anyone with a moderate amount of intelligence. They are surrounded, it is true, with a host of rules for observance and practice, but such rules are strict laws, and if the student offends any one of them, he will be quickly apprised of the fact, when his only course is to study to correct his mistake. Further, such laws are known and printed, and pub-

lished. It is so, for instance, with the laws of Painting. An offence against the principles of perspective in a picture would be as easily detected by a Dutch artist as it would by an Italian master; it would be as easy of perception to a Swedish painter as it would be to a Spanish authority.

It is not so with Singing. There may be a few principles, some laws, and there is no end to the theories and so-called 'methods,' but strangely enough no two of these agree, and they are scarcely recognisable beyond the individual area to which they belong. There are no fixed laws; there is no guide of precept and example by which a human being of average intelligence can set about learning and mastering it as he could many other self-imposed tasks. And when we consider the antiquity of song, and the well-nigh innumerable followers it has had, it does seem strange that there should be a single question of doubt in the matter. A large percentage of people are born with an innate desire to sing, but no such feeling attaches itself in a like degree to the other arts. But comparatively few have the wish to be painters, sculptors, or even soldiers, or sailors, nor do many long to meddle in politics, religion, and the like; but with regard to

singing, very many concern themselves with it, and have a voice in the matter.

With such an amount of admiring interest, then, constantly being brought to bear upon the subject, it might reasonably be argued that a great deal would be known and disseminated about Singing; and that the Art would have been reduced to a system—a theoretical study, with a set of hard and dry rules, the poring over and acquisition of which would be the course to take, in order to become a veritable Patti, a Mario, or Tamburini. This, however, is not so. We know actually but little about Singing, and it cannot, certainly, be said that we have any very firm grasp of the Art. There is no one—not even a professional singer, or a leader of Singing—who can say with certainty that it might not suddenly slip from our fingers, and be lost to us for ever, so variable an Art is it with which we have to deal. It cannot be caught, trapped, and preserved. Like a 'Will-o'-the-wisp,' it turns up where we least expect it, and frequently disappears quite as mysteriously. No real dependence can be placed upon a singer's voice; a moment may dispel for ever that which it has taken well-nigh a lifetime to acquire. Nor can a singer's work be

handed down. If a painter makes a picture it can be hung on a wall, be admired, and then copied. Not so the singer's art-work; it dies with its possessor: and even in its full career it is constantly wavering, varying, and changing.

It is to this cause that we must attribute that uncertainty and fluctuating character peculiar to the Singing Art. As it is impossible to hand down Song in anything like tangible form, we are ever, and of necessity, creating *new* material. We cannot bring nineteenth century ideas about singing to bear upon eighteenth - century art-work. The organs of voice enjoyed by a Mario of a past generation cannot be borrowed and made the object of a fresh and an advanced system of training in order that the voice may thus contribute to the pleasure and happiness of a second generation. No; the voice dies with the singer, and whoever has the good fortune to be the new comer has to train from the beginning and make the best use of his *own* vocal tools—those of his predecessor are out of all question. Thus are we, of necessity, constantly discarding our old foundations and going to the pains of constructing fresh ones upon which to raise our new structures.

But Singing has other strange characteristics. We may listen to a great singer, and we may be told how such an one *produces* the tones which we so much admire. We may even rush home with a burning intention of putting into practice all that we have been told and have heard. The result, though, would most surely be a *fiasco*. Voices are like faces; no two of them are the same, and they vary not only in compass and quality, but in sympathetic *timbre*, and in many other respects. So, we may listen to any number of singers (tenors or any other voices) sing the diatonic scale of any one key, and we should be able to distinguish readily a different quality of voice in each vocalist, although the notes which each rendered were identical. Singularly enough, too, this variation in the qualities and *timbre* of the voices might be followed further. Some of them would affect a listener much more than would others. Naturally weak voices would possibly 'tell' more than those of stronger organs, but each voice would assuredly have its distinctive quality, and be productive of an individual effect upon the listener.

As, therefore, voices vary, it is manifest that they require special and individual treatment. A tenor must not be trained like a baritone,

nor would it answer to apply to a soprano the same 'method' which might suit a bass vocalist. It is the necessity of such varied treatments in voice-training which to some extent explains that indefinite condition in which we find the Vocal Art. Nor, perhaps, is there a remedy —the Art being one varying so much in differently constituted individuals, and dependent in a great measure upon the moral as well as the physical conditions of life as to render it a difficult subject with which to deal, and one quite out of the range of calculation.

No master has really a fixed principle of teaching Singing. Such a one may *profess* to be the possessor of that characteristic, but we may be quite sure that he is more or less an experimentalist—who is frequently called upon to give way and to sink his individuality. A case in point occurred some time since at the Royal Academy of Music. A student spent the best four or five years of his life there cultivating Singing. He was pronounced a tenor. Recently, and when he should have been earning a good living, two authorities pronounced him to be a baritone, and this character of voice he is now studying and using! Thus, Singing-masters are not infallible! Even at the National Training School there are two (or

more) methods of Singing taught, and at the Royal Academy there are divers methods; while as to private teachers, the variety which they contribute to the subject is well gauged by an incident vouched for by a friend of the writer, who was one day taking a private lesson from a man who wrote a book on the subject, and whose principle was a 'fixed larynx,' while in a room below a master was engaged in propounding to a pupil the wonders to be accomplished on the principle of the movable larynx! To continue, it takes a first-rate master twelve months at least before he can honestly say to himself, 'I know that man's (or woman's) voice. I know its strong points —also its weak ones. I must fight shy of that, but I must train and develop this.' Where would be the use of a fixed principle where such variable voices and constitutions are to be met with? and such is the case with every individual.

Thus we see that it would be well-nigh useless labour to write fixed methods of Singing, and so to hand down from generation to generation views which, however fitted they were to their purpose at the time they were written, would probably be valueless in a hundred years afterwards. We can, therefore,

never hope to improve greatly the Singing Art. It will probably go on fluctuating as it has done for some generations in this and other countries. Here and there a great artist will rise up. Some one will appear with a throat large enough to swallow a penny loaf whole, as was the case with Catalani; or we may even get a long list of great artists; but sooner or later the dearth will come and we shall find ourselves as badly off as we are at present for a worthy successor to Giulini, Rubini, and Mario.

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In England the Singing Art has a truly fine field. There is a wide scope for all forms of vocal art, and the area is not over-stocked—not at least with first-rate artists. Were it so, it would hardly be possible for so many foreigners to accumulate fortunes and to be paid the price of a villa-residence for singing 'Home, Sweet Home,' and 'The Last Rose of Summer' in a jargon which is anything but the English language. There is room on the stage of either Her Majesty's Opera or of the Royal Italian Opera for any artist who can prove himself (or herself) equal to the trying ordeal of the highest class of lyric stage business, and capable of holding his own against any foreign comer. Nor are English *impre-*

sarii opposed to the utilisation of native talent, provided it is presented to them in a form which will compare favourably both in the vocal art and histrionic ability with Italian and French singers. The present *personnel* of both Opera establishments bear witness to this, for there are several artists singing under Italianised names who are essentially English, although we will not go so far as to say that they have not been compelled to 'live and learn' for some years in the 'land of song' before they have become competent to assume even minor operatic *rôles*. The difficulty, however, with native vocalists for Italian Opera work is chiefly their naturally cool temperament, their inability to act, and their disadvantage vocally; though these are barriers which present themselves to our vocalists in an almost similar degree when opera in English is before them. How to walk the stage and to conform to all that is set down in the art of *Plastique* are qualities which do not come naturally to English people; and until we have an establishment under State aid, where this most necessary branch of the Lyric Art may be studied, many English singers will continue to remain mere 'sticks' and 'dolls' so far as acting is concerned.

For vocalists who do not aspire so high as the Italian Opera stage there is much lyric work for which the demands are less exacting. In English Opera, in Opéra-bouffe, in the representation of Italian Operas with English words, in that class of work of which 'H.M.S. Pinafore' is a splendid specimen, and in those spectacular musical performances for which the Alhambra is famous, there are good openings for native talent of moderate merit, and in the competing for which foreigners would stand at a disadvantage. In this class of work the highest vocal and histrionic ability are not needed: yet, it is of an order to tax the powers of men and women who are above mediocrity, while the prizes to be earned are certainly sufficiently substantial to place their receivers in a comfortable position in life.

But London, not to mention the provinces, affords many other opportunities for those who make their life and existence dependent upon their labours in the field of Vocal Art. There are the numerous Oratorio performances by the Sacred Harmonic Society, the Albert Hall Choir, the Bach Society, and others, the Crystal Palace Saturday afternoons, and the Monday Popular Concerts; the Philharmonic Recitals, Mr. Boosey's Ballad 'mornings,' 'afternoons,'

and 'evenings,' besides the Covent Garden Promenade Concerts, and the innumerable miscellaneous performances, public and private, which are given throughout the year—all these present openings for any comers who are capable of stepping into them; and the marvel is that there are so few English singers who are so qualified.

While the demand for singers is so great, it is a pity that the means and the opportunities for acquiring a sound training in Singing are not in existence. No one will deny that this branch of what we term our English Musical Art is left almost entirely to private enterprise, and that masters from the four corners of the earth may come here and teach us not only 'how to sing,' but how to pronounce our own language; while, should one of such happen to be provided with a new 'method,' his success is pretty well guaranteed: he may at least count upon a good long innings, and have no fear about the influx of his guineas until his game is completely played out—a process, by-the-bye, which involves some time in its fulfilment in a metropolis so extensive in its geographical area, and in the number of its individual seekers after singing fame.

Without doubt the Royal Academy of

Music is both a useful and a reliable Institution in which to study. Moreover, the Singing Department has for its head one than whom there is not a greater living authority on anything relating to Singing; but it will be manifest that one master cannot impart elementary lessons and finishing instruction to a house full of scholars for many days together; and the inference to be drawn is that the individual attention which each student receives from Signor Randegger is scanty, and comes at intervals which must of necessity be few and far between. The subsidy from the State is not, we suppose, of so munificent a character as to enable the head-master to give as much time as he might desire to his Academical work—indeed, it would not be surprising to find that a *maestro* of such standing is actually at a loss in holding such a post, though it is to be hoped that no feeling of this kind will ever lead him to vacate a position upon which the future of Singing in England so much depends.

Some day, perhaps, London will have a *bonâ-fide* Singing School, maintained at the expense of the Government, wherein the Art will be taught by a staff of competent Professors who shall be paid liberally enough to

enable them to devote their whole time to the work of the Institution. The main feature of such an institution should be its Singing Department, although it might not be unwise to have a class for the study of the art of declamation, and for dramatic training. Above all, there should be attached thereto a Theatre wherein the students might give practical evidence of their ability, and from which they should not be allowed to migrate until they were admitted to be qualified men and women in their Art. We might then be spared the pityful sights of newly fledged artists frightened well-nigh out of their lives at the sight before them of a 'full house,' and so losing, perhaps, their best chance in life from their inability to 'bear up' in the face of a staring audience and the bewildering tiers of boxes and gas-lights.

Until we can boast of such an Institution as this, the charge of the Vocal Art will remain in private hands, and rich and poor students will continue to drop their guineas into the pockets of masters who advertise and those who do not.

Of 'Professors' of the Art, there is no end. Any number of masters profess to teach the Lamperti method, though not ten in a hundred

of them have probably been in Italy, much less have studied under or have even seen Lamperti: others advertise to teach the Art, including the shake, in twelve easy lessons without practice at home: another can tell his clients 'how to sing' on an entirely new method: the grandchild of some celebrated master advertises to teach his departed relative's method of singing! another ingenious master bases his ability to teach Singing upon the fact that he is a nephew of a celebrated vocalist long since deceased! All these, and many more of the same type, gain a living by their too confiding clients. In the end the pupil finds out his mistake. He can do nothing: his time is wasted and his money too: and, supposing his voice has not been ruined into the bargain, there is little outlook for him beyond the prospect of another master, and the risk of again undergoing a similar experience in some modified form.

A student in search of instruction in Singing is, indeed, a sorry spectacle; and having regard to the difficulties which beset him and the numerous pitfalls into which he may easily fall, it is not surprising that English Vocal Art fares so badly even on its own soil. The difficulties to be surmounted in gaining even a

sound knowledge of Singing are of no common order, apart from the after-difficulties in getting a hearing and making friends. Not only must such a student have the command of a goodly number of guineas, be the possessor of an indomitable perseverance, and be well-nigh 'a saint' in a moral view, but he must even then have an exceptional organ of voice, otherwise the ten or twelve (for there are not more) competent Singing-masters in London will hardly care to devote their energies to students who are without the most essential qualification for a vocalist—namely, the natural gifts. Pupils with guinea fees are as plentiful as blackberries, and while the 'small fry' in the teaching profession may be inclined to disagree with what is here said, it is nevertheless the truth that one could name on his two hands eight or ten Professors of Singing who find no difficulty in securing pupils even at so seemingly a prohibitive fee as twenty-one shillings for some thirty or forty minutes' instruction. But these honestly guide those who come to them, and often have occasion to explain to some would-be pupils the uselessness of wasting their money in the endeavour to train what they really do not possess, and the time and little freedom thus gained is frequently bestowed

upon some poor hardworking student for the profession, who, while possessing all the natural gifts for a musical future, yet lacks the needful funds to command lessons to that end. To be fortunate enough to find such favour in the eyes of an acknowledged Singing-master is, perhaps, the only royal road open to those who essay the difficult task of seeking fame and fortune through a study of the Vocal Art.

For those aspirants who are not so fortunate as to win the smiles of a master who can 'place' them for concert and other engagements in addition to the advantage of instruction, the road is a difficult one upon which to set out. The anxious student will discover, sooner or later, that he can easily pay away much money and get but little value in return: he will experience more or less difficulty in finding a master in whom he can continue to have confidence: he may or may not find an instructor who will improve his voice and not destroy it: he will probably come across a man who is 'really good' in 'placing' the voice and in imparting a knowledge of the art of properly 'producing' the tones, but who, at the same time, shall know nothing about 'finish' and 'expression,' and the art of ren-

dering English Songs as they should be rendered. The anxious student may leave this master (having learned, as he fondly hopes, 'how to place the voice'), in search of one who can teach him what he lacks—namely, 'style' and 'finish;' and having found such, will be in the act of offering a *Te Deum* for his fortunate experience, when the new master meets him with the discouraging information that his voice 'is all wrong'! In this way even an intelligent student may be bandied about from one side of London to the other, until after having had an experience with the whole tribe of second, third, and fourth rate 'Professors,' he has either given up the pursuit in despair, or has learned enough from one and the other to make it worth his while to hazard a few more guineas for the opinion and advice of a master of undoubted reputation.

It is to be hoped that sooner or later there will be a radical change, so that it will not always be necessary to make the acquaintance of well-nigh every Singing-master in London before one can be qualified to sing creditably, to say nothing of becoming a Professional Vocalist. A School for Singing on a more liberal scale than the present Royal Academy

or the National Training School is what is needed. Some day, perhaps, we shall get it.

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The relations existing between the Professional and the Amateur of the Singing World are not of the happiest description. They look upon each other with no little contempt, suspicion, and envy; while both of them seem to lose sight altogether of the fact that they are mutually dependent upon each other. It need probably be scarcely pointed out that as Singing cannot be learned from a book, the only means of obtaining a knowledge of the Art is by securing the advice and instruction of either a professional vocalist or some Singing-master, who, though not actually a singer, may yet be competent by his knowledge of what Singing is and should be, to teach the same. Here is, therefore, one instance of the dependence of both parties on each other.

This instruction, we would add, cannot be acquired without some cost of money, time, and patience. During his training the Amateur must be a humble mortal if he wishes to make progress. There must be no self-conceit—no ideas of self-merit; and while it would be very undesirable for a student to indicate his willingness to black his Singing-master's boots, he

should endeavour to ingratiate himself into the good feeling and interest of his tutor; for that the student's time, and voice, and money are entirely at the mercy of the master is only too true. Reference has been made to the above directions in which to look for instruction, because this is a point upon which much ignorance prevails, and it is one in respect to which it is impossible to exercise too much discretion. Anyone, we must remember, can undertake to teach Singing; and many do take upon themselves the responsibility of imparting the Art, only there is unfortunately another side to the picture. There is no examination to pass in order to establish one's fitness to teach Singing, nor is any one teacher called upon to give evidence that he (or she) can even utter a few musical tones. The consequence is, that many utterly incompetent persons undertake tuition. In London alone there are probably no less than four or five thousand people who give Singing-lessons, and when it is remembered that the actual teachers who are competent to teach, and into whose hands it would be safe to place one's voice, could be named on one's ten fingers, enough will have been said to warn the reader from being led astray by flowery and enticing

announcements, betraying in themselves a far greater ability in the science of advertising than of the art of voice-training. This is good advice: Don't be led away by cheapness; don't place faith in any rapid instruction that may be promised; go to a good master in the first instance, and pay your guineas first and your shillings afterwards; above all things, don't be conceited, nor impatient. To intending professional vocalists, much might be said by way of advice. Let them, however, live temperately, and pay as much regard to their moral life as to their professional studies, and their greatest pitfall will be avoided. The moral trial has proved a far more trying one to thousands of promising students than has the technical labour. Hundreds of young people have well-nigh mastered the principles and the art of Singing; but the moral strain has been too much for them, and they have fallen under it.

When the Amateur has learned Singing, and is qualified to feel himself an amateur-professional, he will leave, and perhaps forget, his master—especially if that master is without a name. He, however, must not lose sight of the fact that he owes something to 'the profession,' although he may in all justice say

that he has liberally paid for that something. The obligation may have been mutual, but he will do well to show his gratitude for that insight into the Art which his probably superfluous money has enabled him to obtain. Then he will not persistently stand in the way of his professional brethren. If he knows anything of the professional singer's life, he will be aware how severe a race it is for many who are engaged therein. A true amateur (and not that species whom I have termed the amateur-professional) will throw all the work in the professional's hands which may come in his way, and even the semi-amateur ought to lean to this direction. It would not be right or honest for anyone not wholly dependent upon the art to habitually sing in public and receive fees for the same—especially if in doing so he stands in the light of a professional worker. There are, no doubt, many amateurs who could be as regularly 'engaged' as professionals, did they wish it; for many of them sing as well as professionals, but no one would welcome such a persistent invader. No one in the profession objects to seeing an amateur on the concert-room or any other stage; but the profession is rightly and justly indignant if by this act bread is being taken

from the mouths of any of their craft—that is to say, if the Amateur belies his name, and by receiving payment for his services robs the profession of its lawful income. The Amateur, then, has a most delicate task before him (or her) when stepping into public life as a singer; and such will find that much good judgment and foresight will need to be exercised in the associations he may have with professional folk. This especially concerns those Amateurs who aspire to 'come out' as Professionals. To these we would say, Wait; pursue you study steadily, earnestly, and artist-like. Whatever you find to do, do it with all your might. The prizes are great; one among you may be a Rubini, or there may be a Tietjens, or a Lind; there may even be a second Tamburini; but remember you can never be like unto one of these unless you make friends with 'the professional.'

CHAPTER IX.

WOMEN AND MUSIC.

Woman's Relationship to Music—Her Position in Past Ages—Her Physical Adaptability—Her Indirect Aid—Directions Open to Women — Singers — Pianists — Stringed Instrumentalists—Objections to Wind Instruments—Women as Composers—F. L. Ritter on Women and Music—As Teachers—Present-Day Anomalies—Lady Amateurs—Female Study at Trinity College, London.

Now I come to an important phase in the consideration of our subject. I have hitherto said little or nothing concerning the relationship of Women to Music in England—a relationship so worthy of consideration, so ripe for treatment, and so deserving of attention by reason of its present aspects and future promise, that the reader will, I am sure, pardon me for devoting this chapter to some remarks about Women and Music, especially as I cannot but believe that women are destined to play a

much more conspicuous part in respect to Music than they have hitherto played. Moreover, the decline of this century seems to be bringing with it a mighty wave of sisterly power and intelligence, and it cannot be doubted that among the subjects upon which this regenerating influence must set its mark, Music will undoubtedly occupy a pre-eminence.

The relation which Women bear to Music in England does not appear at first sight to be an important one: indeed, many people are apt to look upon it as one which it would be undesirable to see developed into anything approaching large proportion, and this they say for both musical and social reasons. It is not impossible, however, to show that such an idea is a mistaken one; and further, that to strengthen the tie between Women and Music would be productive—especially in England—of much direct and indirect good both to Cecilia's divine Art and its fair supporters. Before proceeding to say how so desirable an end is to be realised, we may well consider some few points bearing on the fitness of the Musical Art as a subject for culture by Women.

The history of all ages and nations shows

her inseparably connected with that apparent necessity of existence which each nation regards, or has regarded, as its Music; and it would be difficult to sever the tie, or to think of Music without the aid and presence of the other, even were there the desire to do so. This is so with many modern nations, especially with uncivilised races, and with the Ancients it appears to have been much the same. The discoveries of tombs, slabs, and monuments prove this: for women, far more frequently than men, are depicted playing on instruments both of wind, string, and percussion. We will not go so far as to say that such a condition had its origin from any superior musical power of which women were possessed. It is more probable that she was compelled to associate herself with the Art, especially in times of war, when from her inability to take up arms she played a good part in inciting the stronger sex to feats of daring and heroism. Or, to hazard another theory in connection with these frequent representations of her as a musical performer, she may from time immemorial have looked upon her lord as her master, and so have grown to regard it as quite a matter of duty to contribute to his pleasure by soothing him with some

grateful theme such as his soul liked. Nor is it at all probable that the ancient gentlemen to whom we refer would object to an amusement which in itself was so innocent, and one which was not without a certain amount of charm and interest.

But neither the practice of Music as an incentive to war and conquest, nor the use of it as an after-dinner cordial, or as a recreation after a day's work, were likely to prove very satisfactory studies to those who performed them; and it is to be regretted that Women, instead of using their intelligence for such purposes, did not follow the Art more as a peaceful accomplishment. Instead of being thus *forced* to associate herself with Music, it might have been better had she allowed herself more freedom, turning to the Art for Music's sake, and with an ulterior object nobler than that of satisfying the appetite of musical gourmands. Had she pursued it less slavishly and more for her own pleasure, making it more consonant with her own nature, the Women of earlier ages might have left some greater mark upon the Art than they would seem to have done; for, strange to relate, there are no records in early history of any great female musicians, and it was not till after the

fourteenth century that Woman identified herself to any great extent with Music. The closer association of the two would certainly have been a happy union, for Women would have grown to adorn the Art, while Music would have settled itself into the arms of an appropriate and careful keeper.

Women are eminently fitted physically and intellectually to follow Music both as a study and an accomplishment. The emotional element is very strong in women—stronger perhaps than in men, and this force is a desideratum when considered in its relation to Music. She is also the personification of all that is artistic, delicate, sensitive, sympathetic, tender, and true—qualities which combine, indeed are essential, to form both the real Art and Artist. Hence the attitude which Women bear to Music becomes a subject of some interest, and one which is worthy of every consideration. Possessing the higher qualities in a more marked degree than do men, it seems far more consistent to reason that Women, in preference to the stronger sex, should be called upon to transfuse into the Art those qualities which form the very essence of all true musical work.

Physically, there is no great obstacle in the

way of her adopting the Art generally as a serious study and a profitable work: indeed, she has in this respect also many advantages. Her fine long hand, and pliant lissom fingers, her easy and flexible wrist, would prove of inestimable benefit in those branches of the Art where brilliant execution is needed; such, for instance, as in pianoforte or violin playing, to acquire which execution, and to keep the same in a state of perfection, demands from males an enormous amount of regular practice. Again, Woman's susceptibility is greater than that of Man. 'Their constitutions,' says Mr. Haweis, truly enough, 'are like those fine violins which vibrate to the lightest touch.' If therefore she is so receptive, why should she not reflect the Art in an equally strong, or stronger, degree? Or, if she is as receptive in Music as some are inclined to believe, is there any reason why she should not be also creative? Those who have written on the subject, besides that far larger number who do not write but who talk, are ready enough to admit a great deal in favour of Woman as a Musician, yet while they are willing to award her a qualified meed of praise and encouragement, they appear to be chary in going to the full length of urging her to 'go in' for the Art

and its honours fully and unreservedly, both in its executive and creative branches.

It is to be regretted that Woman does not take the matter in her own hands. If on all sides it be agreed that she possesses the *suaviter in modo* of the Art, why should she not herself supply the *fortiter in re*, and make the exquisite *finesse* of her frame more felt by some happy union of it with that emotional force and dramatic strength which are popularly attributed to her ?

The Art is already largely indebted to Women, and no consideration of the life and growth of Music could be made without discovering the good part which Woman has played in respect to it.

In the days of the early Church she probably lent her voice to swell those sacred chants and hymns that echoed through some cave or low-roofed room, whither it was the wont of the first Christians to hold their services; it were probably the rich-toned trebles whose voices last died on the breezes which swept the still plains of Palestine with holy song on those solemn evenings after the Resurrection: while, to come to later times, who would question or seek to underrate the aid which her presence has lent to the Art in the Services of the convents,

nunneries, and in more modern Church establishments? But not in Sacred Musical Art only has she done much. To Women are we probably indebted for the preservation—if not the creation—of the many folk-songs and traditional melodies which abound in all countries, and especially in England. The soothing cradle-songs and lullabies, so varied and numerous in our native land as well as in other countries, are not on the face of them the studied productions of the trained musician, nor the work of the absent knight, or the strolling-player, but rather the natural expressions of many a lonely and anxious mother, who has sung to sleep at her feet the one strong link between her and the absent father. The spinner at her wheel; the lady with her tapestry; the nun with her lace—how weary and how monotonous would have been the hours in the lives of many such but for the outburst of many a musical vein! How many melodies have come and gone to the plying of a needle, and to the rocking of an infant's cot! Were milk-maids ever dumb? Do nursemaids and peasant-girls never pipe? What is the plaint of the field-women's laboured chant; or, what is the theme which shepherdesses have always sung of? How do the joyous market-

women lighten their loads and shorten their journeys; and have not the happy fisher-women for long centuries sung, in our own island and elsewhere, of the joys and the sorrows of their toilsome life? And is not all that music? Who shall fix the number of such creations bearing on them, as they readily do, the imprint of woman's authorship; and who shall measure the influence of so great a flood of varied vocal utterances upon Music in general?

The origin of such Art-work as has been referred to may be wrapped in mystery, and it would perhaps be difficult to find the inventress of any part of it—nevertheless, to the writer's mind it goes much further towards establishing Woman's fair share in the growth of the Art, and her close relation to it both in the past and for the future, than do all the tales narrated of St. Cecilia, the so-called 'patroness' of Music. If St. Cecilia served Music at all, she probably did little more than thousands of songstresses and trouveresses both before and after her have done, and the names of whom can never be mentioned here or elsewhere.

* * * * *

The directions in which Woman might closely and worthily associate herself with

Music are many; but before considering these, let us dispose of the question of the physical capacity of Woman as a Musician. In this respect we may at once say that she has much in her favour, although on the other hand there is no little which that high barrier, *prejudice*, has conjured up against her studying and following the Art as a profitable pursuit. Nature has richly endowed her with points of advantage denied to man; but, strange to say, she has failed in a marked degree to turn such endowments to account, and has not made anything like the progress she is capable of making with the Art, and which is so completely within her grasp. Music is a field that could and should be worked most successfully by Women; yet, her progressive policy takes her into far less fitting spheres of work—even into the dissecting-room—while that direction eminently suited to her is passed over, and man is allowed to monopolise it.

The objections which are entertained and expressed by a percentage of mankind against Woman's work in Music will probably die out; and the class of individuals who used to shudder at the idea of a girl playing a violin, or of a boy at the keyboard of a pianoforte, may yet see no less a sight than a body of 'petticoats'

forming a part of the orchestras 'of the future.'

Singing is one direction in which Woman's position and power may well be considered. In Singing we have a branch of Art peculiarly adapted to her: and a field of study which must always be the first and foremost to be considered by her. It is one absolutely her own to the end of time: no man can wrench it from her, or encroach upon her ground: for the distinctive quality of the Woman's voice has now asserted itself—the superiority of Woman in this walk of Art has been so incontestably established that nothing can upset it. The days may be said to have passed when male voices flaunted themselves and gave themselves 'airs' as queens, princesses, and heroines of the lyric stage. Woman has stepped into the field of Dramatic Musical Art, and it will require a great deal of force and argument to remove her from it. In this sphere she has certainly held her own—indeed, she has shone with lustre; and she will do enough in the future if she but continues in her career and leaves a line of Catalanis, Malibrans, Sontags, Grisis, Tietjens, Pattis, Nilssons, Albanis, and Gersters for future amateurs and historians to look back upon.

To exhaust the list of 'queens of song' from the beginning of the earliest records of them to the present day, or to recount the various distinctions which Woman has won for herself through her song—to tell of all her achievements and her successes—to dwell upon the hours of pleasure which she has afforded through her Art to others, and to speak of all that example which her impersonation of good and bad characters has accordingly produced, would be a long story. It will suffice for Woman to remember how elegant and valuable an instrument is the human voice. She carries it with her—a no mean moral agent which, when strengthened by the trainer's Art, and reflecting as it should a pure and healthy life, may charm many a kindred soul and bring home an ennobling and elevating emotion in many a stricken breast.

If Singing is a direction in which Women might with advantage turn their musical talent, that implied by the term Instrumental is not less adapted for her capacity or further removed from her reach. It is another branch of the Art in which she can, if she wishes it, gain equally as brilliant laurels as she has in the Vocal. Beyond a certain amount of prejudice no real reason exists to show why

Woman should not associate herself with this branch to a much greater extent than has hitherto been the case. With one exception—the pianoforte—the whole of this wide field has been neglected: and yet it is difficult to see why it should be the fashion for a girl to sit at that long-suffering instrument playing five-finger exercises and 'pieces' any more than she should spend her time with a violin, viola, or violoncello. Surely before long they will see the error of their ways and betake themselves to a new love.

Of course, much praise is due to Woman for the mark she has made with the pianoforte. In modern days the names of Mesdames Goddard, Schumann, Menter, Essipoff, Zimmerman, and Viard-Louis are a tower of strength; but Women might do better than bestow all their time, patience, and intelligence on an instrument so nearly 'done to death.' Why not turn to the organ and harmonium?—both of which instruments she could well manage and excel upon.

Better still would it be to find the playing of stringed-instruments generally studied by women. It cannot be urged that these are out of place in her hands, since Madame Norman-Neruda, and Mademoiselle Vittorine

de Bono are living contradictions of that plea: while the graceful character of the violin out of a woman's hands, still more so in them, is admitted on all sides. And that tangible results may be obtained from a study of the violin is borne out by the prominence which Madame Norman-Neruda holds in the musical world. When she appears in public she is judged as a violinist—not as a woman, and she neither asks for, nor receives, any allowance because of her sex, before beginning a solo.

It would be well to see Madame Norman-Neruda's example followed by many more of her sex. They probably would not meet with her success; but they may count upon finding in the violin an instrument which is of all others the most sensitive and most fascinating—second only to the human voice as an interpreter of the soul. Women, too, have patience—and that is a quality which of all others is needed to conquer the violin. Or, should the violin not find favour with some, there are the viola, the violoncello, and even the double-bass, whose parts being usually subordinate, can be mastered with greater ease than that of the violin. Many advantages would spring from such a course. A new field of study

would be opened for female intellect and skill: it would mean a sure impetus to the commercial side of Music: Music in the home could be made more attractive: a string quartet—the most enjoyable of all forms of Musical Art—might easily be brought together: and lastly, but not least, there would be fewer pianofortes required: and that most abominable of all modern inventions—'the Three Years System'—would meet with a blow from which it is to be devoutly hoped it would never recover.

It is not likely that the remaining instruments of the modern orchestra—such as are comprised in the 'wind' family—will ever find much favour with Women. Minerva in her adventure with the Flute set a fashion which all her sisters have emulated: distended cheeks and swollen lips are not yet regarded as marks of beauty, and it is doubtful whether they would be much appreciated did they prove the possession of ever so much patience, industry, and talent, on the part of those who could boast of such distinguishing features.

The flute, the oboe, clarionet, and the whole of the brass family, it must be admitted, offer but little inducements to Woman to take up and practise; although, should any strong-

minded, and it might be added strong-winded, individuals entertain the notion, they would not be establishing any new precedent, since a female cornet-player is not a *rara avis* in the Streets of London, and the band of lady performers from Vienna, under the title of 'Dames Viennoises,' has already appeared in London a year or two ago, and earned strong eulogiums for the skill and ease with which they performed upon their respective instruments. The playing of that orchestra as a body was remarkable for its taste and precision, and for the charming effects which were produced in spite of the evident inferiority of their instruments. Besides strings, the orchestra included one bassoon, an oboe, one clarionet, two flutes, cymbals, and drums—a much-to-be-admired combination of feminine skill which met with the hearty and appreciative reception that it honestly deserved.

Further, there is a third direction in Musical Art-work which women, as a body, seem to fail to see, namely, as composers, *i.e.*, creators of Music. With this walk of Art, attractive as it is both as an Art and a Science, Women have done comparatively nothing—and this condition has arisen, we believe, not from any inability of the sex to grasp the subject, or

from any disinclination or want of taste for meddling with the science; but because it has hitherto been considered to be quite out of the province of a girl's education, even among the wealthy, to enlighten her in the subject of Harmony and Counterpoint—say even the rudiments of such—while a surreptitious acquirement of such knowledge, and the sly practice of a few resolutions, modulations, and the like, would have been regarded as a mental aberration. Yet, the science of Music, both in its extent and depth, is a fine study, involving as it does the rigid laws of mathematics, acoustics, technical knowledge of instruments and languages, to say nothing of the psychological bearings of the science. An American authoress —F. L. Ritter—advocating the field of Musical Art as offering many advantages to her sex, lays stress on this particular branch. 'Why,' says the authoress, 'should not women of sufficient intellectual and especial ability to warrant the possibility of their obtaining honourable distinction, make an effort, and, discarding the absurd idea that composition is an affair of instinct, study to compose for immortality also? There is surely a feminine side of composition, as of every other Art. And I would suggest the adoption of the science of composi-

tion as an elective, if not obligatory, branch of the higher course of study in Ladies' Colleges. From actual personal experience, I do not hesitate to pronounce it equal—merely as a mental discipline—to mathematics, while it enriches the mind to a far higher degree, and is far more likely to prove of practical benefit to women in after-life, than the study of the other sciences.'

It has been said that 'a woman seldom writes good music, never great music.' This remark might be quite as truly applied to men, inasmuch as among the latter it is equally as rare to find a composer writing *good*—we do not mean *popular*—music: while the Titans of music (of whom Mendelssohn is said to have been the last) only seem to come in a cycle of years. But the paucity of Woman's work here is not owing, we believe, to her inability to grasp and deal with the Science, but may rather be attributed to that prejudice, and the rules of fashion and etiquette which, as we have before said, have for so long barred her from entering this field of useful and profitable work and study.

It would not be hard to name more than one Woman, of our own time, who has written music to which many male composers would

be pleased to have their names attached. It may not be 'great' music: but then, who has written great music of late? The Cantata entitled 'Evangeline,' with the many songs and other compositions by Virginia Gabriel: Claribel's charming songs and ballads: the musical writings and editings of Miss Agnes Zimmerman: Madame Sainton-Dolby's New Cantata, 'The Story of the Faithful Soul': the Concerto in A from the pen of Miss Alice Mary Smith, and the many songs, pianoforte pieces, etc., by this lady, are all Woman's work which we can safely say would not be unworthy the signature of any living male composer. The works referred to have all met with public favour. Miss Smith's Concerto has been performed at the Crystal Palace Concerts; by the British Orchestral Society; at the Norwich Festival of 1872, and elsewhere; and at every hearing it has found new admirers, and unanimous opinions in its favour.

It is to be hoped that the study of Harmony and Counterpoint will become a recognised feature in the education of daughters of the wealthy. The knowledge of the science need not be put to profitable account: it may be regarded simply as an accomplishment, and

how difficult it would be to name one more fitting; but the possession and pursuit of it as a mental exercise, and its value as a key to an extended field of work, should its holder ever need to revert to it, are cogent reasons why it demands the consideration here suggested.

Lastly, as Teachers, Woman might find much to engage herself in by properly qualifying herself in one or more of the branches indicated. Here personal attractions, influence, and rare talent are not of great weight. The conscientious, patient teacher is certain to make a good livelihood, and the first-class teacher will continue to receive as liberal a fee as is paid to the physician. Of the greater fitness of Woman to teach her own sex, and the preference many girls and parents have to a lady teacher, if a qualified one can be obtained, there can be no question.

To those who seek the glare of publicity and its attendant criticism, the retired *rôle* of the teacher would not perhaps prove attractive, but the many would regard it as a becoming sphere of duty, and those who may choose it would soon discover that their choice was a good one. Unlike the various other branches of musical work, it is subject to no 'ups and

downs,' and fraught with no risk from whims of fashion and fancy. The public favourites on the stage and the concert-room may come and go: a great violinist may be eclipsed by a greater, but the teacher is with us still, labouring patiently, it may be obscurely, but nevertheless profitably and honourably, in a responsible and a useful work. Much work of the highest class has fallen to Women in this capacity, and not to tire the reader, we need give but one instance, that of Mrs. Anderson, who taught Her Majesty the Queen the pianoforte, and in other ways contributed to the development of the rare musical talent of our gracious Queen.

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In England at the present time Women cannot be said to hold any high distinction in matters musical; but there is reason to hope that when the progress of Education has carried us a little further, and all young ladies are allowed to believe that their heads are given them that they may think and judge for themselves, there will then be less difficulty in their associating themselves with the Art. It is well enough to write about Women being 'the great listeners to Music,' but they are already more than that. Society, and frequently

enough circumstances, combine to impose upon Women a totally opposite *rôle*, and instead of being the 'great listeners,' in many drawing-rooms they resolve into the 'sole performers.' This fact renders Woman's position in respect to the Art a somewhat difficult one. Thus, it becomes almost obligatory with every educated girl to shine musically in the drawing-room; yet, those who would have her ambitious there, decline to countenance anything approaching what they term a 'public' (not a 'professional') appearance. It is hard to see the difference, in these days of 'afternoons' and *salon* gatherings, between singing a song in St. James's Hall and repeating it in a Park Lane Concert Room, seeing that the publicity of the one is scarcely more than the other. It is, too, a one-sided bargain to ask a Woman to use all her energy to become a drawing-room artist, and to frown on her, and be prejudiced against her, as soon as her inclination may prompt her to turn her knowledge and ability to profitable account. But, if the truth be told, this 'preventive clause' is of great value in one respect, inasmuch as we should all regret a large exodus of aristocratic Women into the world of Music. Such a step would overflow the market, Art would become cheap, and a

great many deserving female artists would find it a hard matter to continue to gain their present scanty living. Happily enough, however, Musical Women of Society never step upon the toes of their sisters in the Profession ; and they cannot be too highly praised for shrinking —amid much foolish adulation which is lavished upon them—from making a public use of musical talents and powers such as, in some instances which have come under the writer's notice, have not been inferior to Professional skill and ability. By gratuitous performances fashionable women might do much in indirectly advertising their own cleverness, as well as in crippling musical business ; but it is noteworthy how little there is here in London of that kind of thing : how generous society is towards 'Professional' Artists : how it makes room in its 'afternoons' and gatherings for a proportion of the Professional element : how largely it patronises the best forms of Art which every season brings with it : how it calls in Masters and Professors of every phase of Art, paying them fees which are truly liberal: and at the bottom of all this—those on whom it is chiefly spent—those who thus magically influence the purse-strings, are Women ! Such Women in their relation to Music, then, are

something more than 'great listeners:' they are great workers, liberal patronesses, upholders of the Art in their select and truly influential world: lovers of the Art, who, amid a thousand cares and engagements which their positions impose upon them, yet find time to acquaint themselves with one or more branches of the Art to an extent and with a success which many of its so-called 'students' and 'professors' would do well to emulate. The obligation is a mutual one: Musical Art is served in high places, while there is no doubt that to such Women Music comes, to quote the words of a talented writer, 'with a power of relief and a gentle grace of ministration little short of supernatural.'

And there are other Women who associate themselves with the Art, the numbers of whom are becoming more and more large—Women of middle-class status, who support themselves and others by their efforts as governesses, teachers, companions. It is from these that we expect much. While the vast tide of Female Education is pressing onwards and embracing all questions and subjects which involve study, perseverance, and research, it would be strange were Music disregarded, affording as it does so fitting a field for

feminine patience and intelligence. But it is most unlikely that such will prove to be the case. The following statistics, the accuracy of which may be relied upon, are ample proof that the subject of Music is receiving the attention of Women; and it is gratifying to find, that not to one branch alone, but to several, is that attention being directed. At Trinity College, London, there are, as we write, several lady-students of the violin; there is one class of about forty ladies studying Harmony, Counterpoint, and Fugue; while there remains the significant fact, that at the Higher and Local Examinations in Music held by the same College during the past three years, upwards of five thousand female candidates have presented themselves; and their work, both theoretical and practical, has been found fully equal in merit with that of the male candidates. It is, indeed, in consequence of this unmistakable evidence of female aptitude for musical theory and practice that the authorities have recently thrown open to Women the highest diplomas of the College.

In connection with this, it may further be stated that at a recent Chamber Music competition, open to all comers, no less a judge than Sir Michael Costa awarded the second prize to

a Pianoforte Trio by a lady member of the College.

Such facts speak for themselves; and gratifying as they must be to the authorities of that excellent Institution—Trinity College, which affords timely opportunities for studying which are not to be met with elsewhere—they furnish also good evidence that Music as an Art and study belongs as equally to one sex as to the other.

A great and a valuable ally will this Female enterprise some day prove itself. Music—youngest of the Arts, yet greatest in the influence which it has already exercised over mankind—will have won over a great influx of fresh life and energy; the field of Music will be more fully explored; its extensive sphere will be probed by a keener if a less strong hand; then some day the veil will be uplifted—all humanity will acknowledge its language, and Music will stand revealed as the mightiest among the Arts.

CHAPTER X.

OUR MUSICAL PROGRESS.

Is England a Musical Country?—Britain's Early Musical Instinct—Our Present-Day Strength—London Societies—The National Tastes—England's Patronage—Our Leaning towards Foreign Talent—Lack of Education—Our Music Schools—Education for the Amateur—Trinity College Classes—The Teaching of Music in National Schools—Tests for 'Professors'—'Manufactured' Music—A Characteristic Style.

It would have been well to have closed the present volume with the subject of the preceding chapter, but I am loth to leave so genial a theme as that of Music in England without expressing my conviction that in spite of the many undesirable features which the present day Art has inherited, we have every reason to take a hopeful view of the situation before us. And this I propose doing in this concluding chapter. Music in England is no doubt weighted with many disadvantages—of

a more or less obstinate character—arising partly from ignorance, partly from custom. Yet we need not despair. On the contrary, our musical progress has been so great during the past fifty years, that we might easily make too much of the picture which that progress affords, and lose sight of considerations which are more important than the mere growth of the Art. We must not shut our eyes to the spots and blots that mar our system; and if we adhere to this resolve, the consideration of the growth and progress of England as a Musical Power cannot be other than a healthy and gratifying study.

Is England a musical country? The question is one which has been asked over and over again, and the reply has as frequently been—'No: for' (continue the respondents) 'it has given birth to no such great composers, neither has it produced such eminent vocalists, as have other countries; moreover, it has sent forth comparatively few instrumentalists who have figured prominently in the World of Music.' Italy, France, and Germany, we are told, have chiefly done that, and these countries especially have given to the world the names and works of composers which will live as long as there are in the world fingers to play and

voices to sing the compositions they have bequeathed. And the above-quoted reply is not altogether wrong if we gauge the strength of Musical England by that of other countries. True, we can claim the nationality of the Madrigal composers—Byrd, Morley, Wilbye, Dowland, Weelkes, and Benet; and in Church Music, Tallis, Farrant, Wise, Gibbons, Croft, and Purcell, but what are these compared with a Beethoven, Mozart, or Rossini? Having regard to the state of Music in England when Purcell lived (1658-95), he is the greatest native composer that we can boast of, and after him no one approaches nearer to him than does Sterndale Bennett; though neither of these stand in the rank where Handel, Mendelssohn, and others are to be found. Hence the conclusion to be drawn is that we have yet to find the man who shall represent England in Music as these represent Germany, and others, France and Italy. Nor is it hard to account for this representative man not having already been among us. Until recently the Art of Music has not had a fair chance in England for developing itself and making its way amongst us. We are accused of being an un-musical nation, and provided we are declared to be weak in the creative element,

but strong enough in the 'patronage' of the Art, the accusation is not untrue. True it is that our musical education has been neglected; and as it is impossible to make progress in any work without good tuition, so it is that we are not so strong in Music as we might have been had our education in the Art been better cared for, and had the present facilities been in existence twenty-five years ago. To go a long way back, there is ample proof that the early inhabitants of Britain were imbued with as much musical instinct as can be traced in those of any other country in remote ages. The records of this island in the Druidical times have evidence of this fact; and the early languages are rich in the possession of musical terms, some of which, such as harp, pipe, fithale, and others, have come down to us. Of the success of Minstrelsy, both as an Art and pastime, we have all heard and read. Kings did not disdain to practise it, and nobles, chiefs, and serfs alike were not forbidden, but rather encouraged, to pursue it. This natural musical instinct does not, however, appear to have made much headway until the time of the sixteenth century, when England seems to have burst suddenly into musical life, and we then find those names which we look back

upon with pride as representing the most glorious period of English Musical history.

But when we have glanced for a while at our interesting list of sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century composers, the names appear small indeed compared with those colossal Musicians which Germany, or Italy, or France have furnished, and we cannot but ask ourselves—Are we ever to have an English Beethoven or Mozart ?

To answer such a question correctly is beyond us all ; but we may well look at the condition of Music in England at the present time, and then ask ourselves whether it seems improbable that such a representative will yet rise up among us. The conclusion we must come to is, we believe, that the Future looks bright enough. We have now a firm grasp : and ere long there is reason to hope England's musical strength will be on a 'par' with that of other countries. No country probably has made the same progress in Music that England has in, say, the last fifty years. During this time the 'New' and 'Old' Philharmonic Societies took life. In addition there was Mr. Henry Leslie's late Choir, the Sacred Harmonic Society, Mr. Barnby's Choir, the Crystal Palace Concerts, the Monday

Popular Concerts, the Albert Hall Concerts, and more recently the 'British Orchestral' and Bach Choir performances, with others. These are 'great facts' in London, to say nothing of the large and increasing number of musical societies throughout England.

Here we have a sign that Music is much needed, and, moreover, that it is largely patronised. That we have resolved to deserve no longer the reputation of being un-musical, the number of London and Provincial Societies, for the performance of Standard Music, well attest.

It is worth while to reflect, however, upon the constitution of these Societies. They cannot be said to be thoroughly English, inasmuch as it is to be feared that while the choral element is truly 'native talent,' yet the orchestral and solo parts are performed chiefly by foreigners—men of all languages, who have found their way here from different motives and circumstances; so that as the proportion is not less than six to one, it is evident that English instrumentalists are not a 'stock' which flourishes extensively in this country. It is a pity this should be so. It would be more satisfactory to feel assured that in this case the supply were equal to the

demand, and we should then be spared the reflection that a great deal of money leaves the country annually which should properly find its way into the pockets of English performers. For this, however, our lack of past musical training may no doubt be blamed.

The Chorus of these different Societies can compare with that of any of the continental Choirs. There is nothing to fear in this respect. Mr. Henry Leslie's well-trained Choir gained the highest position for itself at the Paris Exhibition. The Sacred Harmonic Society's Choir, and the Royal Albert Hall Chorus have reached a high degree of excellence, and the members of these are indisputably—English.

Of the Music performed by these Societies, and concerning the way it is rendered, much might be written. The 'Philharmonic' (the 'Old' as it is now termed) professes to, and does, give in almost faultless style the instrumental works of the 'great masters'—German, French, and Italian. Occasionally something of English origin and growth is introduced; but, alas! the exception is the rule. The 'New' Philharmonic aims at the same object: but now that Dr. Wylde has thrown off the reins of management its future prospects do not look

very bright. The Sacred Harmonic Society, as we all know, devotes its energies to the interpreting of compositions in the Oratorio form, chiefly written by German masters. The Royal Albert Hall Choir follows in the same track; while the London Musical Society has set itself the task of familiarising English people with those scores which are either little known, or which have not had a hearing in this country.

There is, then, no lack of performances. The unfortunate part of the matter is, that there is so little English Music performed at them. The only Society which could be said to be at all favourable to the study and performance of English Music was Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir, and it will certainly be admitted that it did justice to the works which it undertook. The glees, part songs, madrigals, and other forms of English Musical Art, used to be given with a degree of excellence which it would be impossible to surpass either in this country or elsewhere. But so limited a performance of native Music is not a sufficient encouragement to English musicians to devote their time and labour to the Art of composition when their attention can be so much more profitably occupied even in teaching; and now

that Mr. Leslie's Choir has dissolved, the prospects are still more gloomy. It is, therefore, a matter for regret that our Musical Societies, of which we can boast so many, do not do more towards encouraging composition by more frequently including English works into their programmes, instead of studiously excluding them. The small quantity of English Music which is at present heard in a season's round of concerts is ridiculously small; and rightly enough is it argued by composers that there is no hearing, and consequently no field, for anything which they may compose outside the limit of a four-part song, anthem, or drawing-room ballad. The inducements to compose should be more, and without doubt the result would be a great increase in creative skill. Until some step, such as has been indicated, is taken, this branch of English Music cannot be expected to grow, but, on the contrary, will continue to lose ground, and perchance decay.

* * * * *

We see, then, the kind and character of the compositions which our Musical Societies study and place before the public. It is the best music by the best masters—the classics, as we may term them, of the tone-Art; and as these

Societies are well attended and self-supporting —receiving no subsidy from the State, such as is allowed by other Governments—it is clear that a large section of English people is gifted with a good taste for choosing its musical programme. But there are others to be considered—those who from one cause or another have only reached a certain point in their liking for music, and whose taste, stunted in its growth, can only be gratified by hearing the lower forms of music, through those various and degrading channels which the various street-performers adopt.

To one of these two sections English musical people may be said to belong and to extend its sympathies. Yet, in one respect, their views are identical; since they both support liberally that phase of Art to which they have allied themselves, the sophisticated side of Art in this country being quite as substantially supported as is its more legitimate counterpart.

As Patrons of music, then, English people deservedly stand alone. We do not even stay to inquire as to the quality of the article, but are content to pay whatever *impresarii*, managers and the like may choose to ask for their musical stock, whether that be good,

bad, or indifferent. Moreover, this apparent indifference, or want of discrimination, is the same in 'high' as well as 'low' musical life, extending as it does to the opera-stage, the concert-room, and to our street-entertainments, in the patronage of which people part with their money with a readiness which is wondrously unsatisfactory. Did they exercise half as much caution in this respect as they do in many other ways—in their deeds of charity, for instance—how great a bearing might that discretion not have upon Music in general? *Impresarii* and the like might then ask in vain for the exorbitant prices which they now demand for the boxes and stalls of their theatres. No longer would large sums of money be paid for the privilege of hearing (as we can now) so-called artists who, if they are good actors, have hardly recovered from the first principles of singing; or who, if they can sing, are deficient in histrionic ability—so much so, that it is painful to see such individuals enter or leave the stage, to say nothing of their doings when on 'the boards.'

We repeat, English people patronise Music right well. The indifferent phases of the Art prosper, and so do those that are more legitimate. Not only will 'Mr. Pipes and Whistle'

tell you that he gets along famously in both the seasons of heat and frost, but the legitimate Artist finds a profitable trade all the year round either in the orchestra or at private gatherings, and when these are not held, by teaching. If this is so with the lesser Artists, it is still more the case with those of distinction—soloists both vocal and instrumental, who, in the course of a short London season, are enabled by their talents to gain enough and to spare, even could they find nothing to do elsewhere for the remaining months of the year. For many of them, however, there are always engagements in London or the provincial towns—so insufficient is English instrumental talent. With a few brilliant exceptions we have no native instrumentalists comparable with foreigners; and the consequence is, we are for ever falling back upon this foreign element to meet our unusually large and steady demand for instrumentalists great and small.

Thus England has been, is now, and probably will be for some long time to come, a desirable settlement for musicians of all countries, however slender may be their right to those distinctions which they seek.

* * * * *

We have seen, then, those points in which we are as strong as, perhaps stronger than, our neighbours in France, Germany and Italy. In our Musical Societies and the numerous institutions throughout England there is substantial evidence that the Art is receiving a larger share of consideration than it is generally supposed to have from us; and this is confirmed by the patronage accorded to Music and Musicians. A London Musical Season is a fact talked of all over Europe, and there are few continental artists of any calibre who have not wended their way here, to try their skill, and in many instances have found it well worth their while to frequently repeat their visits. This country has found fortunes for hundreds of artists, and has not only filled the pockets of many a vocalist or instrumentalist, sending him back a veritable prince to his native soil, where he saw nothing but incessant toil; but it has also opened its purse-strings to no end of foreign artists, who, having no talent, have had nothing to recommend them but their long hair, their foreign accent, and an untidy appearance.

But our willingness, and it may be indiscrimination, by which we aid foreign talent, both good and bad, is not the weakest point of

Musical England. This in itself would be no great matter for complaint, seeing that we have no better article of the kind of our own. A less satisfactory picture is our Musical Education, and the slender means which we use to create a better species of the Musical Englishman. We need to turn our whole attention to this matter, and until we have done this, we must neither envy the foreign element in our places of honour, nor grudge the large sums of money which leave this country annually from causes over which we might exert considerable control, even if we did not entirely remove them.

Few will, perhaps, disagree with the statement that the means of musically educating English people are insufficient—a condition much to be deplored in a country where there is so much good material waiting to be turned to account. That people want Music the numerous Societies' performances which are attended even by crowds clearly prove. Then, again, they do not object to pay for the luxury, as many a *virtuoso* who has tried a London Musical Season knows well enough. He will tell us that London is the musician's paradise ; where he need play but little, and secure the most gold, and where he is not only

fêted, but more or less idolised. Thus it becomes a crying shame that something is not done to turn our own material to better use, by giving it an opportunity of rendering some account of itself musically, and thereby gauging in some measure, as well as profiting by the influence of, the continuous influx of foreign musical talent which we so constantly and so cheerfully employ. It used to be thought that a National Music School would secure all this: indeed, some years ago the present writer advocated such an institution as that which has since grown up at Kensington, under the title of 'The National Training School of Music;' but the support given to this institution does not appear to be of a kind that will guarantee a prolonged measure of success from this long-talked-of establishment. The non-existence of such a school, or college, was thought to be one of the greatest obstacles to musical progress here, although with the want being supplied its presence is, at present, little felt.

The backbone of Music in this country is the Musical Amateur, by which is meant that large section of individuals who are not 'professing' musicians, but who are the cause of all music being made, imported, and encour-

aged here, who patronise it, and find the money which pays the orchestras, maintains the societies, and, in short, which keeps alive that vast musical machine which contributes so largely towards the enjoyment of life. This is the element which should be fostered, and the education of which should be a first care. In the writer's humble opinion, the means of obtaining instruction in musical subjects, either in London or the county towns, are inadequate. The National Training School, the Royal Academy, the London Academy, the Society of Arts, and Trinity College, are wonderful Institutions in their way, but they have not as yet proved themselves equal to the real difficulty. For filling the ranks of the musical profession these means are probably sufficient, but if we are ever to have such a strength in Music as we have, say, in Painting, something beyond that will require to be done. The Societies enumerated will no doubt be sufficient to recruit the ranks of our future 'Professionals' and teachers of music, but that is not the only point to be regarded. Something needs to be done by which the next and future generations will grow up in an atmosphere of musical art and education, and that can only be accomplished by some radical change in our present system. The existing

institutions do not grapple with this want: except to the few who intend making Music a profession, they are, with one exception—Trinity College—as a sealed book. Their being placed in London alone, and the fact that their doors are open for but a few hours daily, is a sufficient proof of their inadequacy to meet the wants of Musical England; for an English Handel, or Rossini, is just as likely to come out of the black regions of Birmingham, or the wilds of Lancashire, as from the more aristocratic air of May Fair or South Kensington. There are thousands of individuals throughout the kingdom having quite as much music in their organisms as have many of those studying at the Royal Academy; but how different are the chances of the development of such with the one and the other! As matters are at present, the only course open to the youth, or girl, who feels that he, or she, has music in their soul is to go to the local 'professor,' or some advertising master; and it need scarcely be pointed out how unsatisfactory and superficial a method such a step too often proves itself. Too frequently the pupils pay for what they never receive.

A grand chance was given to the future of Music in England when the teaching of Music

in schools was thought of, talked of, and determined upon; but this opportunity was thrown away, and instead of the children being taught to sing scales and intervals, with tunes, and being drilled into a sound acquaintance with the usual notation in which all the greatest scores have been written, and future music will be written, the time and intelligence of the scholars are being devoted to the mysteries of the Tonic-sol-fa system—a thing admirable in its way, and a short cut—yet quite out of place when so important a consideration is at stake; for at some future time those of the students who follow up the Art *must* turn to the old notation, and will find it more or less foreign. Could they be brought up to regard a knowledge of the Art as essential to their education, be taught the rudiments of music and be made acquainted with the various intervals of the scale side by side with their ordinary elementary education, then such a future would be perhaps guaranteed, which all the 'returns' issued by the existing establishments fail even to suggest.

We feel sure that it is with the early education of children that the first principles of music might most consistently be associated. This could most properly be done in their

schools, and the future of the scholars would be little the worse, either as men and women, or even citizens, were they taught that amount of musical knowledge, at the expense, if need be of some other subject: since the influence of such an Art as Music on the characters of a people is more beneficial and more worthy of note than it is generally supposed to be, especially by that set of coarse-grained folk who see in it nothing but the high-road to all that is feminine, distracting, and generally injurious! Let us trust, then, that some day the first principles of Music will be taught in our National schools, side by side with the A B C, the seemingly useless 'pothooks' and 'hangers,' and such like elementary subjects.

* * * *

It would be wondrous easy to trace much of the present musical indifference and weakness to the non-existence of a general musical training, or education, and also to the absence of a qualifying test among masters and teachers. At the present time there is no institution other than Trinity College, London, whose doors are open at an hour of the day and evening when amateurs and intending professional students alike may avail themselves of the advantages of such. At the institution referred to both

sexes may obtain the best of instruction at a moderate cost, whether they aspire to the art as a profession, or as an accomplishment. This impartial instruction is all-important. It has too long been the custom among masters to encourage certain gradations of artistic proficiency, and to eke out various degrees of their stock of knowledge and patience according as the futures of their pupils might suggest. In teaching the pianoforte, for instance, this baneful practice has been systematically employed. School-girls and young ladies at home have had their own way with their masters, which latter being afraid of losing their patronage, and only too glad to avoid the trouble involved in serious teaching, have readily enough turned away from scales and exercises, for those wonderful samples of girlish patience and cleverness—the 'pieces.' But, because a pupil is never likely to appear in a concert-room professionally, surely that should be no reason why a different calibre of instruction should be imparted to such a one in return for the guineas paid; or why the Art should thus be dragged down.

Were there tests of proficiency for Teachers and Professors, we should secure men who would give no instruction but the best, and

who would have in view the ultimate development of each pupil's talent—a method which would prove advantageous to both master and pupil, which would extend our musical progress, and build up a future for Musical England. Such masters would not give way to the whims and fancies of their scholars at the cost of the Art, but instead they would take them through the necessary technical course, which must be traversed before any real result can be accomplished with so grand an instrument as the pianoforte (and of course the same applies to other instruments and the professors thereof), and gradually introduce to their consideration and intelligence the works of the great Masters of Musical Art. An early acquaintance with such works will not dishonour their authors or the pupils—for they form mines of precious wealth—rich with gems great and small, and an early peep into these will lead to a desire to explore them more and more fully, and to fathom, if possible, their depths—a task of never-ending pleasure and reward which few students have yet been found to complete.

In the face, too, of so sound a course of study, how badly would that section of composers fare who 'manufacture' music for the

popular taste? No longer could they ply their trade at the cost of the musical reputation of the people. As there would be no students of the pianoforte, whose time might be more profitably employed in other directions—it would not be necessary to produce music suited to their requirements. Then we should hear the last of the 'Gems'—there would be no more 'Flowers'—the Morceaux de Salon; the 'Pearls' and 'Fantasias' would have been played out, and music proper would reign in its stead. The days of easy waltzes would, let us hope, be over; our next-door neighbour's one-fingered melody with the 'tum-tum-tum' in the bass would be conspicuous by its silence, and our thoughtful moods would no longer be disturbed by a confusion of sound, all of them in that least interesting of measures, the 'dance time.'

Under such improved conditions as those indicated, Music in England would be much more advantageously placed, and the country might be expected soon to grow to a greater musical strength. Whether we can reasonably hope for an English Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn, we need not now discuss; but if the chain of such musicians is not for ever broken, who shall say that the country of a Shake-

speare and a Newton, of a Reynolds and a Chantrey, shall not produce an equally eminent man in Music?

We should, at any rate, be nearer to the acquisition of that characteristic style which it has been said we *have* had, about which so much has been written, but which it is most difficult to trace. For, our old Madrigal writers were not thoroughly English in their style, which flavoured rather of the half French, half German: Purcell's works betray his attachment to the French school: and we all know that the compositions of Sterndale Bennett—the chief disciple of Mendelssohn—are largely German. A true English style, we think, is yet to come, and the best—perhaps the only—way of ensuring it and of forming a line of English composers, instrumentalists, and vocalists, is to establish a *thorough* system of musical education in England.

CONCLUDING.

I NOW say to my reader, *Au revoir*. The remarks I have been led to make have been made in no captious spirit, or with any desire to catch at defects which may be considered to exist only in imagination. Unhappily the imperfections assume no such visionary forms, but are constantly thrusting themselves under our unwilling eyes, and my readers will be the best judges whether or not it has fallen to their lot to experience any of the ill-effects of such a grievance as—say the Encore nuisance. Nor, because I have not exceeded the limits of one volume must it be assumed that I have wrung the last note from my subject. On the contrary, there are several other phases calling for observation. Some day I may return to the subject, and continue the present thread of remedial suggestion.

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